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# The Unity of the *Seven Against Thebes*

Brooks Otis

THE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCE between the first (lines 1-652) and last (653-1004) parts of the *Seven Against Thebes* has been often discussed: yet the 'unity' or 'disunity' of the play is still in doubt. Two recent writers (Kitto, Harald Patzer)<sup>1</sup> illustrate the persisting disagreement. Kitto sees in 655f the 'sudden revelation' of the 'other side of Eteocles, his hatred of his brother, his inability and his unwillingness to control his mood and fatalistic leap upon his doom.' Patzer sees in the same lines Eteocles' *new* understanding of what the gods ordain: the duel with Polynices, impious as in one sense it may be, is yet divinely decreed; he now sees he cannot evade it. Both reject the older *communis opinio*<sup>2</sup> (Wilamowitz, Mazon, Snell, Pohlenz, Schmid, Murray, Méautis) that interprets 653-719 as Eteocles' own *free decision* to save the city and/or preserve his soldier's honor.

In this article I want, first, to outline the present situation of criticism or scholarship on the play and to suggest the lines along which, in my view, a sane interpretation of its 'unity' is now possible.

## I

One major milestone of modern criticism of the play was Solmsen's 1937 article on the "Erinyes in Aischylos' *Septem*."<sup>3</sup> Solm-

<sup>1</sup>H. D. F. Kitto: *Greek Tragedy* (1939) 51f; H. Patzer, "Die dramatische Handlung der *Sieben gegen Theben*," *HSClPh* 63 (1958) 97-119.

<sup>2</sup>Wilamowitz, *Aischylos-Interpretationen* (1914) 56ff; P. Mazon, *Eschyle* (Budé ed. vol. I [1931]) 104f; Pohlenz, *Die Griechische Tragödie* (1930) 80f; W. Schmid, *Griechische Literatur-Geschichte* v.I 2 (1934) 208f; G. Murray, *Aeschylus* (1940) 130f; G. Méautis, *Eschyle et la Trilogie* (1936) 100f; Snell, *Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama* (*Philologus*, Supplementband XX Heft 1 [1928]) 78f.

<sup>3</sup>*TAPA* 68 (1937) 197-211.



sen here gave new emphasis to the radical shift in the character of the play after line 653 and showed the inadequacy of previous interpretation of the shift. He says: 'It is a mistake (amounting to a *petitio principii*) to think that his [*i.e.* Eteocles'] mode of behaving after 653 must be in some way foreshadowed in the preceding parts of the tragedy. On the contrary, the fact that previous to our scene Eteocles has all the characteristics of an ideal king and general adds to the tragic *ἐκπληξίς* by making the onslaught of the Erinys all the more dreadful and appalling.'<sup>4</sup> It cannot, I think, be doubted that Solmsen here pointed to something that had been seriously neglected before. Wilamowitz<sup>5</sup> suggested the presence of two discrepant sources or traditions (one the first *Thebais* in which Eteocles is a Theban hero; another, the 'younger Epic,' in which he is the mere inheritor of an ancestral curse) and even of two different choruses (before and after line 653); and Croiset<sup>6</sup> saw in the earlier section of the play a deliberate and theatrically effective design to distract the audience's attention from the curse. But it cannot be said that most critics (*e.g.* Pohlenz, Murray, Snell) took the great 'discrepancy' of the play very seriously. By and large Eteocles remained for them the perfect hero whose decision after line 653 was in full harmony with his actions and words before that: 'Was ihn zwingt,' says Pohlenz, 'ist sein eigenes Pflicht — und Ehrgefühl.'<sup>7</sup> Between this and Kitto's view just cited there is an evident abyss. Pohlenz, in effect, sees no change in Eteocles' character, only the *decision* which this character imposes; Kitto sees a wholly new Eteocles — the mad avenger and hater — displacing the patriotic hero of the earlier part.

It is *prima facie* difficult to accept either view: there must be some reason for the apparent change of character, something that explains the evident truth behind *both* Pohlenz and Kitto. We cannot in other words explain the play simply by taking one part of it and imposing it on the other: if Aeschylus is not to be considered the grossest of dramatic bunglers, there must be some principle of unity which is broader and more inclusive than *either* part in itself.

<sup>4</sup>*ibid.*, 202.

<sup>6</sup>M. Croiset, *Eschyle* (Paris 1928) 118.

<sup>5</sup>*op.cit.* 66, 68.

<sup>7</sup>*op.cit.* (note 2) 91.

Perhaps the most considerable and well reasoned of very recent attempts to find such a principle of unity is the article of Harald Patzer already referred to. He starts by accepting Solmsen's more or less negative finding of disunity. The problem, he sees, is to account for the re-emergence of the Erinyes or Curse after line 653. He rejects (rightly I think) Kitto's view that Eteocles ruins himself before line 653 by progressively eliminating all alternative courses of action: *i.e.* when he makes the *best moral choices* for the first six gates, he fatally appoints himself to the seventh. Here Patzer accepts Wolff's thesis<sup>8</sup> that Eteocles has *already chosen* the defenders for each gate even before he could hear from the messenger who the corresponding attackers were. What therefore Eteocles learns from the messenger or spy is simply the true character of the curse which he had heretofore misunderstood or taken only in a general and impersonal way. He now sees (*i.e.* when he learns that Polynices is to meet him at his self-chosen post) that the *Curse* is unavoidably personal: he himself must fight Polynices and the gods themselves have decreed the *miasma* of fraternal murder. The chorus, of course, does not see the terrible reality, the fact that Apollo and the other Olympians insist on *this* fulfillment of the *Curse* as the only possible solution. The House of Laios must all go down in mortal destruction; as a result Thebes, the *polis*, will be saved. Eteocles is of course overwhelmed by his new and final understanding of the situation but he also accepts its necessity. He remains the patriot and warrior that he always was but his formerly uncomplicated patriotism is now shattered by the knowledge that his very duty to the *polis* requires the horror of fratricidal *miasma* and death.

I think myself that Patzer has here come close to a true solution of the problem of the play's unity. But he has not, I think, seen the

<sup>8</sup>Erwin Wolff, "Die Entscheidung des Eteokles in den *Sieben gegen Theben*," *HSCP* 63 (1958) 89-95. As Wolff shows, the language of Eteocles after l. 371 does not indicate that his choices for the gates have not been made but rather in fact have been made. The importance of this point is that it gives greater emphasis to the prophetic-interpretative element in the whole scene. Eteocles is not as Kitto thought, progressively eliminating all but himself from the seventh gate (and thus from the personal encounter with Polynices) but is rather constructing a prophetic justification of his own choices as he learns the identity of his opponents. But he does not realize what he is really doing until his own opponent is named.



full relation of the earlier to the later parts and particularly the crucial role of the gods in both parts. Though both Solmsen and Patzer have rightly insisted on the importance of the *Erinys* or *Ara* (Curse) in the second part (and in the whole trilogy), they have not seen the exact relationship of the Erinys to the Olympians and the City-Gods on which so much (as I see it) depends. Once we see that Eteocles is not only the champion of the *polis* and its gods but also the ordained victim of the Erinys, we can see the true conflict or *drama* of the play: it is, so to speak, a conflict of two rights which is resolved by the Olympians at Eteocles' expense. He, like Amphiaraus, is the good man who must die so that *dike* and the gods can prevail. But, unlike Amphiaraus, he is inextricably caught in a *miasma* which he cannot avoid even by dying. He could not under such circumstance accept with piety a dilemma so terrible. He could not 'flatter his fate'—*i.e.*, make pious professions of humble obedience to the gods—but he could and did accept it. In so doing, he raised, as Aeschylus intended him to raise, an acute theological problem: in what consist the justice and meaning of the Olympian gods? This is, I think, a perspective which enables us to make complete sense of *both* parts of the play, and to see its true unity and meaning.

## II

The prologue of Eteocles (1-38) shows us at once his attitude toward the gods:

4 εἰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ πράττοιμεν, αἰτία θεοῦ.

He is the King, the devoted, sleepless pilot of the city, but his 'success' is in the hands of the gods. His 'failure' would justly consign him to every possible opprobrium: 'from which may Zeus Preserver deliver the city!' (8-9). The impending struggle is one for everything dear and sacred: the city, the local gods, their children, their native Mother Earth. So far the god has been on their side (καὶ νῦν μὲν ἐς τόδ' ἡμᾶρ εὖ ῥέπει θεός [21]): now the seer has prophesied the final great attack; it is a time for everyone's best, last effort.

Against this speech of patriotic piety, the Messenger or Spy now sets his report of enemy fury (39-68): seven furious (*θούριοι*) captains have sworn by Ares, Enyo and Phobos to take the city or die in the attempt. The contrast between the two sides is evident:



the one is invoking the good and just gods; the other the gods of war, panic and destruction.

To this report Polynices responds with a prayer (69-77):

69 ὦ Ζεῦ τε καὶ Γῇ καὶ πολιτισσοῦχοι Θεοί,  
 Ἄρά τ' Ἑρινὺς πατρὸς ἡ μεγασθενής,  
 μή μοι πόλιν γε πρυμνόθεν πανώλεθρον  
 ἐκθαμνίσῃτε κτλ.

His appeal is now to three sets of gods: (1) Zeus, (2) his own Earth and the city-gods, and (3) the Paternal Curse or Erinyes.<sup>9</sup> The meaning seems to be clear: he is not praying to the *Curse* as to a simply beneficent divinity but to it, *along with the other gods*, for some help and concern for the city with which he (μοι) is wholly identified. Whatever the *Ara* may be or intend, it is to him part of that whole divine complex in whose power the city is. Altogether the gods cannot want to destroy a *Greek-speaking* city, a free land, Cadmus' *polis*! The thing seems, and is meant to seem, inconceivable in terms of any viable theodicy. *But Eteocles does not separate himself from the city or its fate.*

76 . . . ξυνὰ δ' ἐλπίζω λέγειν

πόλις γὰρ εἶ πρᾶσσουσα δαίμονας τίει.

The phrase, ξυνὰ δ' ἐλπίζω λέγειν shows Eteocles as the very head and representative of the collectivity. It is almost as if he were saying to the gods: 'Help me because I can help you. I and the city are one.'

There thus seems no ground for supposing (as e.g. Méautis in particular supposes) that Eteocles, in here invoking the Curse, accepts his *own death* as the price of the city's safety. The γε in line 71 can hardly mean 'at least' in the sense that he separates the city's fate from his own, as if to say: 'Save *at least* the city, if not me.' Everything, on the contrary, indicates that Eteocles merges the city's fate in his own: he is the divinely sponsored king. So far from anticipating death, he expects to conduct the sacrificial

<sup>9</sup>On the nature of this Erinyes cf. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Cornell Studies in Class. Phil. 30 [1949]) 186, 34. This Erinyes is certainly not a symbol of Eteocles' conscience any more than the Erinyes of the *Orestia* were symbols of Orestes' conscience. It is a real deity as the fragment of the Cyclic *Thebais* (Allen, *Homeri Opera* V, p.113) also indicates:

αἰψα δὲ παῖσιν εἰοῖσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπαρὰς ἀργαλέας ἡρᾶτο. θεῶν δ' οὐ λάθαν' ἐρινύν.

τροπαῖα of victory and himself to bedeck the temples with the enemy spoils (271-78). It seems plain therefore that Patzer is right in supposing that Eteocles interprets the curse, that the brothers will divide their inheritance with iron (788-90), as a *general* prediction of strife between them. He does not grasp either its direct, personal meaning of fratricidal duel or its ominous application to the burial earth which the brothers at death will divide between them (732-3). Here as elsewhere in Greek tragedy, the prophecy remains ambiguous up to the moment of realization. Eteocles, rather, sees the curse operating against Polynices alone: by opposing his own *polis* and its gods, Polynices has forfeited the right to the support of either the Olympians or the paternal Erinyes. The gods are here thought of by Eteocles as a unity whom he, as rightful king, represents.

The scene between Eteocles and the chorus (182-286) has sometimes been interpreted as evidencing harshness or even *hybris* in Eteocles: he certainly does not conceal his disdain for the yelling, panic-stricken women. But this is hardly tenable exegesis from the standpoint of a live theater. The women are simply beside themselves with fear: no true general or king could stand their cries and panicked exclamations, even their desperate invocations of the gods, without some reproof; it is not so much a matter of morale and discipline as of royal and military decorum. These women are, as Eteocles says, (186) σωφρόνων μισήματα. It is man's business to fight: theirs to keep out of the way. Yet here again Eteocles shows his complete misconception of his own role. 'Don't,' he tells them (223), 'be misguided (μη . . . βουλεύου κακῶς) in your appeal to the gods. Discipline (πειθαρχία) is the mother of success.' The chorus answers: 'Yes, but the God's power is greater still: often he succors a man plagued as by sudden storm in inextricable troubles.' And to this Eteocles replies:

230 ἀνδρῶν τὰδ' ἐστί, σφάγια καὶ χρηστήρια  
θεοῖσιν ἔρδειν, πολεμίων πειρωμένους.  
σὸν δ' αὖ τὸ σιγᾶν καὶ μένειν εἴσω δόμων.

He reveals here not only his concern for male as opposed to female prerogative: the word ἀνδρῶν reflects *himself* as opposed to *them*, reflects also his utter confidence in his own relationship

to the gods. He discounts the chorus' ominous reference to the *unexpected* action of the divine will; he almost gives the impression of having the gods under his own control. The *only* prayer he commends to the chorus is one for divine *alliance* (*συμμάχους εἶναι θεούς* [266]). Let the chorus sing in good Greek fashion the ritual litany of battle, the litany that makes courage and dispels fear. He himself will see to the fighting with his six warriors (282).

His decision to take one of the gates is surely not, as Kitto supposes, an 'alteration' of his original plan adopted as 'by-product . . . of the turbulence of the women'.<sup>10</sup> Nothing of the sort is even suggested and there was surely every reason for Polynices to participate actively in the defense. But the turbulence excited by the messengers (285) has definitely accelerated his schedule of action: he is now determined to appoint the six gate-defenders and himself, as seventh (283-6), before any more wild news or rumors can influence the people further. This seems to me a clear indication (in addition to the language, in itself rather ambiguous, of his later replies to the messenger) that he will make his decisions (as to the gates) at once, thus during the interval marked by the ensuing chorus (287-368) and *before* the great episode that begins at line 375.

The irony of Aeschylus in this Eteocles-chorus scene (182-286) is thus a most important indication of ensuing events. Eteocles stands out against the frenzied, emotional chorus as a supremely self-confident king and general. But his is a wholly misplaced self-confidence. Their insistence on the unpredictable character of events and the gods is far truer to the outcome than his stern self-reliance. Yet their weakness is as blind as his strength. Neither sees the truth or falsity of their own words. Neither has any inkling of the true role of the gods, of the relation of the Erinyes to the gods of the city or the Olympians. The fear of the chorus in the following stasimon (287-368) is only too justified, though the city will be saved. The action which Eteocles is so quick, even overquick, to take is the very fulfillment of that unexpected catastrophe which the chorus ignorantly dreads.

<sup>10</sup>*Op. cit.* 149.



## III

No episode of a Greek play, perhaps, has been more misinterpreted than that which runs from lines 369-718. Verrall,<sup>11</sup> Smyth<sup>12</sup> and (in his own way) Kitto are certainly correct in seeing here a crescendo of increasing horror as it becomes progressively clearer that Eteocles must face Polynices at the seventh gate. But this is the horror (or *ἔλεος καὶ φόβος*) of the audience, like the horror excited by the Cassandra episode in the *Agamemnon*. Eteocles does not know till the last moment that Polynices is to be his opponent. Yet it is not so much the gradual elimination of all alternatives to Eteocles' fatal self-assignment which is important as it is the gradual revelation of divine intention. As we have noted, Eteocles does not decide on the spur of the moment (as the messenger indicates *seriatim* the enemy's dispositions) where he will put his men: that has been already decided. But in both the enemy's dispositions (which were made by the lot, 55-6) and his own, he sees or attempts to see an omen or divine plan. He makes as it were a prophetic commentary — in a sense a theoretical disquisition — on each part of the messenger's speech. The terrible irony of the scene — indeed it is almost unbearable in its power — consists in his utter unawareness that he is thereby judging himself, decreeing, in effect, his own doom. He has set up, as it were, a schema of interpretation which he suddenly and horribly finds to be applicable also to himself. Yet the audience, as it watches, sees the whole frightful process coming to its inevitable conclusion. In a sense there is more tension here than in the Cassandra kommos itself: in both, Aeschylus makes us walk quite deliberately to the very edge of horror; no other dramatist has quite been able to bring off such an effect.

The scene begins with startling suddenness: Eteocles and the Messenger (or Spy) rush simultaneously into the orchestra. The Messenger now knows the correct dispositions of the enemy: Eteocles is naturally wildly eager to hear them (373-4).

The first five besieging captains (Tydeus, Capaneus, Eteoklos, Hippomedon, Parthenopaios) are much alike. Each reveals an

<sup>11</sup>A. W. Verrall, introduction to his edition of the play, p. xxx.

<sup>12</sup>H. W. Smyth, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Berkeley 1921).

insolence, a *hybris* that disdains both men and gods. Against them, Eteocles finds it easy to justify his own corresponding choices (Melanippos, Polyphontes, Megareus, Hyperbios, Aktor). Aeschylus here was not concerned to bring out differences between the five members of each opposing set but to let Eteocles' self-assured role of prophet and moralist gradually establish itself. This part of the episode is, so to speak, the 'buildup' for the ensuing *dénouement*.

Tydeus, the first of the opposing captains, is the picture of unconsidered battle-fury: his harness, the bells on his shield, the emblem of the night-sky and moon, typify his wanton self-confidence. The gods (or omens) are clearly against him, but he bitterly reviles the warning of the good seer, Amphiaraus, and accuses him of 'flattering death and battle through his own cowardice' (σαίνειν μόρον τε καὶ μάχην ἀψυχία [383]). To him Eteocles opposes a warrior, Melanippos, 'who honors the throne of Shame (Αἰσχύνης) and hates haughty words.' Melanippos is a true Theban — a true offspring of the dragon's teeth. His success lies with the dice of Ares but he has been sent by his native *Justice* (Δίκη ὁμαίμων) to defend his motherland. As for Tydeus, Eteocles gives the obvious interpretation of his emblem: the night he brandishes on his shield forecasts the night of his own death. His very folly (ἀνοία) has thus made him the prophet of his own fate:

406 καὐτὸς καθ' αὐτοῦ τήνδ' ὕβριν μαντεύσεται.

Thus the despiser of prophecy is prophet *malgré lui*. Hybris, as usual, has blinded its victim.

We need not underline the irony here: Eteocles has now set up the pattern of interpretation which will have so fatal a personal application. He is of course no Tydeus (indeed it is the very enormity of Tydeus' *hybris* which enhances Eteocles' own sense of moral superiority) but he has enunciated the fatal principle that a man's destiny is revealed in his actions and insignia, blind as he may be to their true meaning. The gods (as Eteocles sees it) deceive the man whom they are about to destroy. On the other hand this principle also determines the choice and successful destiny of such a man's opponents. Eteocles here is *not* (as Kitto supposes) picking Melanippos on the spur of the moment and in direct reaction to the messenger's report (that Tydeus will lead the attack on the first

gate). Actually both choices (Tydeus and Melanippus) have already been made (as we learn from 55-6 and 283-6). Rather, Eteocles is *interpreting* the choices as prophetic indications of the future. He sets himself up so to speak, as the very mouthpiece of fate and the gods, so wholly has he identified himself and his own morality with that of the divine power guarding the destiny of Thebes.

Capaneus, the attacker of the second gate, is the true despiser of the gods. His boastfulness (*κόμπος*) takes the form of religious indifference: he will sack the city, whether the gods will or no. He likens Zeus' thunderbolts to the midday heat. His emblem is a naked man with a torch and the inscription: *I will burn the city*. Of course Eteocles gives the obvious interpretation: this mortal who sends such haughty words to heaven will himself be the victim of Zeus' fire. To him the God-fearing Polyphontes is fitly opposed. Again, Eteocles is blind to any personal application. Could the gods be against him? Can *he* be called a despiser of the gods? Has he ever boasted indifference to Zeus? This at least is the tacit or negative premise of his discourse, though such questions obviously do not enter his conscious mind at all.

The third hostile captain, Eteoklos, is not markedly different from Capaneus. He again boasts against the gods: 'not even Ares,' so speaks his shield, 'could hurl me from the battlements.' And against him is appropriately placed the modest Megareus whose *kompos* is in his hands, not mouth. But the fourth, Hippomedon — another gigantic and delirious devotee of carnage — bears the emblem of the monstrous Typhoeus, who is belching smoke on a shield girdled with interlaced serpents. And to him is opposed Hyperbios, whose emblem is the enthroned Zeus. Eteocles, at this, can hardly withhold an overt prediction of victory: it is surely Zeus against Typhoeus, the victorious against the defeated god:

515     τοιάδε μέντοι προσφίλεια δαιμόνων.  
           πρὸς τῶν κρατούντων δ' ἔσμέν, οἱ δ' ἡσσημένων.

But after the fifth comparison, of the impious Parthenopaeus with the modest Aktor, which raises Eteocles' expectation of deserved victory to a wish which is really a confident prayer:

550     εἰ γὰρ τύχοιεν ὧν φρονοῦσι πρὸς θεῶν,  
           αὐτοῖς ἐκείνοις ἀνοσίους κομπάσμασιν,



the pattern abruptly changes with the very first words of the Messenger:

568 ἔκτον λέγοιμ' ἂν ἄνδρα σωφρονέστατον.

Amphiaraus is the perfect man and prophet caught in the grip of tragic circumstance. He upbraids Tydeus, and in a remarkable speech reminds Polynices of his dreadful impiety to his native city and its gods. As for himself, he predicts honorable death:

589 οὐκ ἄτιμον ἐλπίζω μόνον.

His shield has no emblem: he wants to *be*, not *seem* a hero (ἄριστος). Of course, the irony is intense: in the very act, so to speak, of enhancing Eteocles' confidence by condemning Polynices and in effect predicting his defeat, Amphiaraus presents Eteocles with a prophetic analogy of his own fate. But Amphiaraus has mastered the difference between appearance and reality: Eteocles is still deluded. He does not see anything but the surface: to him Amphiaraus is simply the good man in bad company. When Zeus wills it, the one is dragged in the same net as the other:

614 Διὸς θέλοντος ξυγκαθελκυσθήσεται.

Amphiaraus knows, says Eteocles, that he must die if Loxias' oracles are to bear fruit (617-18). He is a seer accustomed to keep still or say only what is appropriate:

619 φιλεῖ δὲ σιγᾶν ἢ λέγειν τὰ καίρια.

It might almost seem that Eteocles should, at this point, have grasped the truth. But he is in fact blinded to it by his false premises. Identified with the *polis* as he is, he can see in all the signs which point toward Theban victory only *his* own victory as well. In this sense, Amphiaraus is the final, clinching confirmation of his hopes: here was a prophet predicting the defeat of his own side, justifying Eteocles' own position and reasserting the definite allegiance of the gods to Thebes. It was unfortunate that so good a man should be doomed by a bad cause — Eteocles was himself a good man who could appreciate Amphiaraus — but after all, it was also lucky for Thebes *and* Eteocles. That Amphiaraus' fate revealed the ambiguity of divine justice, the lot of all good men who suffer, and thus applied also to himself — of this Eteocles has no suspicion. He cannot, like Amphiaraus, separate himself from his cause. Nor does he see at all the difference between the true

seer who knows what he says and the 'self-made' prophet that he himself is. In fact he is a prophet who cannot understand his own (objectively true) prophecies. He has now been confronted with both the bad man (Tydeus, *et al.*) whose *hybris* invites his own doom and with the good man who in his piety and humility accepts his own doom. The one is deluded by fate: the other is not. But Eteocles is not warned by either example. Oedipus' curse, he thinks, is not to be put in the same category as Loxias' oracles. That Apollo might enact the curse and enact it against himself — of this he has no inkling at all. His identification of his own fate with that of his *polis* and its gods remained absolute and unshaken. The blank of Amphiaraus' shield is blank to him.

The great blow now falls upon Eteocles in a few bald words:

631 τὸν ἔβδομον δὴ τόνδ' ἐφ' ἔβδόμαις πύλαις  
λέξω, τὸν αὐτοῦ σου κασίγνητον . . .

Polynices, unlike Tydeus, Capaneus *et al.*, uses the language of piety and morality. He will either die in killing his brother or drive him into merited exile (636-7). His vengeance is just: he calls on the family gods of his paternal land (θεοὺς γενεθλίου . . . πατρώας γῆς) for help and his emblem is a female *Dike* leading a man-in-arms (himself) with the motto: 'I will bring back the man and he shall have his city and paternal home.'

Eteocles now sees the point. In three lines he expresses both his grief and his horror.

653 ὦ θεομανές τε καὶ θεῶν μέγα στύγος,  
ὦ πανδάκρυτον ἄμὸν Οἰδίπου γένος'  
ὦμοι, πατρὸς δὴ νῦν ἀραὶ τελεσφόροι.

His father's curse, he *now* sees, involves his own death. Polynices has boasted that he will either die in killing him or will drive him into exile: the latter alternative clearly implies the prior taking and destruction of the city and thus constitutes no option for the patriotic Eteocles. Furthermore Eteocles had already chosen his position at the seventh gate: so the gods, by giving to Polynices the lot for this same gate, have clearly shown their intentions. The Destiny that Eteocles saw in the choices of Tydeus, Melanippus and the rest he now sees is applicable also to himself and Polynices. The curse is not to be resolved in the general conflict but in a hand

to hand death-duel between the brothers. The land they are to divide is to be, not the whole country, but only the space of their own graves. Finally it is not hard to 'prophesy' from Polynices' shield. Here the principle that the shield-emblems forecast their bearers' fates turns out to have a terrible personal application. If Polynices' 'justice' requires his return and Eteocles' exile or death, Eteocles' justice, the true justice of the *polis*, requires Polynices' defeat and death. Everything indicates the hand of the gods, of the Olympians as well as the family Erinyes. All that remains for Eteocles to do is to kill Polynices and save the city: his own death is certain and is now taken for granted.

This speech (653-76) of Eteocles is thus *both* analogous to his former responses to the Herald (à propos of the preceding six sets of antagonists) *and* very different from them. The Herald leaves at 652 after quoting the boast of Polynices and exculpating himself from all blame: 'don't blame *me* for reporting the news,' he adds, 'I quote what *he* says: σὺ δ' αὐτὸς γνῶθι ναυκληρεῖν πόλιν.' Thus Eteocles is no longer in a position to respond to the Messenger: it is even doubtful that his speech (653f) is to be taken as addressed to the chorus. It is rather his own inner response to his own fate. Characteristically he meets the terrible news with grim fortitude:

656 ἀλλ' οὔτε κλάειν οὔτ' ὀδύρεσθαι πρέπει.

The immense irony of Polynices' appeal to Δίκη strikes him first, that he, the least just of men, should appeal to justice! Then, in haste (for the point is now obvious enough), Eteocles makes the expected 'interpretation' of the emblem, that he himself is the truly *just* opponent of such perverted 'justice': τίς ἄλλος μᾶλλον ἐνδικώτερος; He savors the irony of his situation to the full: he as ruler, brother, enemy is altogether the *just* opponent (674-5). That Δίκη demands fratricide — that the Olympians and the *Erinyes* both demand it — is now, he sees clearly, the ultimate truth which he must face. To read the speech, with Kitto, as mere fury or hatred of his brother is surely to miss its ferocious irony: it is not Eteocles' mad desire to fight his brother, but his tragic sense of the necessity and certain outcome of the conflict which drives him to such ironical bitterness. This, this, he finally sees, is *justice* — the justice which



he, in his triple capacity of ruler, brother and enemy, must now carry out!

But the chorus does not see what has happened. It urges Eteocles to refrain from the *miasma* of blood-guilt (680-2): his decision to fight Polynices is, as the chorus sees it, a *κακὸς ἔρως*, an *ὀμοδακῆς ἔμπερος*; Eteocles must wait until the enemy calms down (705-8) or the gods are appeased by sacrifices (700-1). But Eteocles knows that his fate is unavoidable: if one can avoid an evil without shame, one should, for honor is the only glory one gains from death (683-5); but death with honor is now the only one possible course open to him. The paternal Erinyes is poised to strike: the best thing is to die at once (697). He sees with a clarity quite denied the chorus that not only the Erinyes but the gods are against him: all they want from him is his death and he will not fawn upon them in pursuit of an impossible security:

702     θεοῖς μὲν ἤδη πως παρημελήμεθα,  
           χαρὶς δ' ἀφ' ἡμῶν ὀλομένων θαυμάζεται  
           τί οὖν ἔτ' ἂν σαίνοιμεν ὀλέθριον μόρον;

The nature of Eteocles' dilemma — and the one possible solution of it — is set forth in 718-19: the chorus asks him if he is willing to spill a brother's blood; he replies that one cannot escape the doom that the *gods* send:

θεῶν διδόντων οὐκ ἂν ἐκφύγοις κακά.

The ensuing stasimon (720-91) depicts and forebodes the total doom of the house of Laius. The *ὠλεσίοικος θεός*, the paternal Erinyes, is not, as the chorus sees it, like the other gods (*οὐ θεοῖς ὁμοίαν*). It wills in its terrible harshness to fulfill the curse of the demented Oedipus. But all goes back to the ancient folly (*ἄβουλία*) of Laius when he disregarded the thrice reiterated oracle. The waves of disaster have grown with each generation and the city itself, Thebes, is threatened with its royal house. It is clear that the chorus has no understanding of the true situation, that the doom of the brothers will not bring on, but rather ward off, the fall of the city. It does not see what Eteocles has seen, that his death is decreed by the gods — not merely by the paternal Erinyes — as the very condition of the city's safety. This in fact is the 'death with honor' of which Eteocles had just spoken.

The messenger now tells them the truth: Thebes is safe; Eteocles and his brother are dead. The grim curse has been fulfilled with the most terrible literalism: the property they have divided with Scythian iron is the earth of their own graves. It is now made clear who is finally responsible. All has gone well at six gates: at the seventh, Apollo has himself been the commander, *ἑβδομαγέτης*, and has himself avenged the ancient errors of Laius (*παλαιὰς Λαΐου δυσβουλίας* [802]). The 'unholy alliance' of Erinyes and Apollo, of the dark family vengeance deity and the Olympians, has now been finally and completely revealed.

The chorus still does not grasp the meaning of what has happened: it is torn between joy for the god's saving of the city, sorrow for the terrible calamity of the house of Laius:

ὦ μέγαλε Ζεῦ πολιοῦχοι  
 δαίμονες οἳ δὴ Κάδμου πύργους  
 (ἔθελήσατε) τοῦσδε ῥύεσθαι  
 825 πότερον χαίρω κάπολολύξω  
                     πόλεως ἀσινεῖ Σωτῆρι;  
 ἢ τοὺς μογεροὺς καὶ δυσδαίμονας  
                     ἀτέκνους κλαύσω πολεμάρχους  
 οἳ δὴτ' ὀρθῶς κατ' ἐπωνυμίαν  
 830 καὶ πολυνεικεῖς  
                     ὦλοντ' ἀσεβεῖ διανοίᾳ;

But it is the sorrow which predominates: the play ends in a long *θρῆνος* or lament for the fallen dynasty. The character of Eteocles is in fact finally overshadowed by the doom of his family. To the chorus everything is so charged with horror, that it quite fails to make sense of the whole tragedy. There is no attempt to penetrate the meaning of events, no approach to a true Theodicy. The role of Apollo or Zeus is left in a murky obscurity.

#### IV

If this interpretation of the play is correct — and it is seemingly borne out by the text — there can be no question of the play's real unity. What differentiates the patriotic Eteocles of lines 1-652 from the desperate man of the following part is simply his new understanding of his situation, of his true relation to both Erinyes and

Olympians, which breaks upon him when he discovers who his own opponent will be. He sees and rightly sees in the 'chance' which puts Polynices at the seventh gate the very hand of both gods and Erinyes. And this interpretation of the messenger's statement is, of course, reinforced by every other detail: the reported behavior, above all the shield-emblem, of his brother, especially when set in the prophetic context in which the previous shield-emblems have already been seen and interpreted, make the point unmistakably clear.

To resist such evident omens and even such a direct, personal challenge would not be prudence, but cowardice. Given his character as previously set forth, his devotion to the city and his responsibility as its ruler, he cannot do other than die with honor. It is not he who has sought or seeks the *miasma* of fraternal bloodshed: it is the *ara* which dooms his house and with which, he now sees, the gods have fully co-operated. Thebes and its gods no longer depend on his safety: *its* safety, on the contrary, demands his own destruction. The irony of the situation for a moment overcomes him, but his resolve is scarcely shaken. Under such circumstances, the chorus' plea that he wait until the Erinyes shall relent or the gods may be appeased by sacrifices, can hardly be expected to impress him. He as least will not 'flatter' or wheedle his fate (704).

Yet in this very phrase (σαίνειν μόρον) there lurks an ominous note. Tydeus, as we have seen, accused Amphiaraus

383 σαίνειν μόρον τε καὶ μάχην ἀψυχία

because that seer forbade him to cross the Ismenos and begin battle: the offerings were unfavorable (379). So when Eteocles declares to the chorus that the only χάρις the gods want from him is his death and adds:

704 τί οὖν ἔτ' ἂν σαίνοιμεν ὀλέθριον μόρον;

he repeats in effect the taunt of Tydeus. We can, in a sense understand this grim response of Eteocles: the gods indeed have cruelly disappointed him. But was not Amphiaraus also as cruelly placed, doomed as he was to die in a bad cause with his eyes open? Yet he remained to the last the seer whose piety seemed not far from cringing servility to a man like Tydeus. The contrast between Eteocles and Amphiaraus is thus revealing indeed. We can say,



of course, that Amphiaras *was* and Eteocles *was not* a professional prophet (μάντις) but there was also something in Eteocles which blinded him to the reality of his fate and thus made him misinterpret his true relation to the gods and the city. This is why his death lacks the tragic grace which is so evident in Amphiaras' last words:

589      μαχώμεθ', οὐκ ἄτιμον ἐλπίζω μόρον.

It is the difference between angry defiance and pious resignation. Eteocles' error was excessive self-confidence and self-reliance: he had been too sure of himself, too convinced of his own indispensability as ruler or 'pilot' of the city. He had confused the will of the gods with his own will. And this is why, in his final disillusionment, he still remains self-willed, the 'master of his fate,' with only a sneer for the gods whose design he has so terribly misunderstood.

But we must not magnify this 'error' or *hamartia* of Eteocles. What Apollo punished at the seventh gate was the 'ancient error of Laius' (παλαιᾶς Λαῖου δυσβουλίας). There is no indication that Eteocles himself had committed any sin that deserved so terrible a retribution. Was he responsible for Oedipus' curse? Had he really maltreated his father? We do not know what the previous play, the *Oedipus*, had to say on this point. But the chorus of the *Seven*, at any rate, represents the curse as an act of frenzied senility (725, 781f). There may have been a fault but it seems obviously out of proportion to the doom which Oedipus called down upon Eteocles as well as Polynices. Had Eteocles been unjust to his brother and unfairly provoked his flight from Thebes? The answer of the *Seven* is, on the contrary, that Eteocles is a far better man than the impious Polynices (here the words of Amphiaras, 580f, surely reflect the poet's own judgment on Polynices) and in no sense deserved the same doom. The fact seems to be that Apollo and the Olympians, in accepting and implementing the *Ara* of Oedipus, are condemning not so much Eteocles as his whole family. It is all the 'ancient error of Laius.' The gods' design was to save the city by destroying the family; to pacify the Erinyes by exhausting its fury in the total destruction of the house of Laius. It is clear that this is in fact accomplished in the play that Aeschylus wrote. The subsequent (post-Aeschylean) addition of Antigone and the burial

question is of course quite out of place in a drama concerned only with the male line: in fact the joint burial of the brothers is taken for granted; they have finally divided their native earth between them!<sup>13</sup>

Nor can we, as we have already seen, suppose that Eteocles had any real option when he rebuffed the chorus and decided to face death at the seventh gate. The presence of Polynices there is the sign of his fate, of the gods' will. His disposition of the defenders had already been made: could he now change them because he sees his brother is his designated enemy? On the contrary he sees here both a true omen and a clear duty. He cannot withdraw without shame. The gods have placed him in a situation where retreat is impossible for anyone but a coward. And he is no coward. Here, as so often in Greek tragedy, character is a part of destiny.

In short, we cannot approach the *Seven*, especially the whole trilogy of which the *Seven* is the concluding part, simply in terms of the Aristotelian *hamartia*. Eteocles probably was overconfident but he is not doomed because of his overconfidence. The Olympians do not necessarily accept the morality of the *Erinys* or *Ara*. Indeed Aeschylus is at pains to emphasize its madness or irrationality (τὰς περιθύμους κατάρας Οἰδιπόδα βλαψίφρονος, [724-5]).<sup>14</sup> So the play, though indeed a unity as we have seen, reveals also a moral incompleteness. There is no true reconciliation of gods (the paternal *Erinys*, the Olympians) or rights (the Family, the City) but a temporary and rather 'unholy' alliance of different gods by which the destructiveness of one (the *Erinys*) effects the political purpose of the other (the salvation of Thebes). Eteocles is in some sense a victim or scapegoat.

This would not, perhaps, matter if Aeschylus were concerned only to give some color of guilt to Eteocles, as if, e.g., he were really the erring but good hero of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Eteocles is not perfect: he presumes, as we have seen, on his position and overdoes his patriotic identification with the *polis*. But Aeschylus has, surely, much more than this in mind. He is a theologian as well as dramatist. The *Seven* has to be seen in a perspective whose terminus

<sup>13</sup>See the recent discussion of this problem by Walter Pötscher ("Zum Schluss der *Sieben gegen Theben*," *Eranos* 66 [1958] 140-154).

<sup>14</sup>Cf. also the account of the *ara* in the *Thebais* (Allen, *op.cit.* 113).

is the *Oresteia*. There the moralities of Erinyes and Olympians are sharply separated: there the *dike* of the *polis* embraces also the rights of the individual; there the theological problem (the opposition of Erinyes and Olympians) is worked out. But we can see some evidence of Aeschylus' development toward this solution in the plays which intervened (*i.e.* in the plays written between 467 and 458).

I do not wish, in this article, to debate again the question of the date of the *Suppliants*.<sup>15</sup> I shall assume that Lesky (and others) are correct in putting it at or about 463. I shall *assume* also that the *Prometheia* probably belongs somewhere in this period (*i.e.* between 467 and 458).<sup>16</sup> If these assumptions are correct, then it is certainly possible to see (without overstraining the texts) a rather evident development of ideas.

It seems clear (whatever else is not clear) that the *Suppliants* arrays two rights and two wrongs against each other: the sons of Aegyptus are obviously rash and insolent, both in relation to the Danaids and to the Argives; but the Danaids, in turn, are quite unreasonably opposed to marriage and Aphrodite, as the *Therapinae* inform them. Accommodation seems to have been possible without war, had both sides been reasonable or *sophrones*. At any rate, both

<sup>15</sup>See the brief bibliography of this question in Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (1956) p. 59 (note) and the summary presentation in Mette, *Die Fragmente der Tragödien des Aischylos*, pp. 42-43. Emily Wolff ("The date of Aeschylus' Danaid Tetralogy," *Eranos* 56 [1958] 119-139 and 57 [1959] 6-34) has rediscussed the whole question at some length. Aside from the stylistic considerations advanced particularly by Earp, *The Style of Aeschylus* (1948), the other grounds for an early dating of the play relate, mostly, to the role of the chorus and the dramatic technique. All too little attention, in my opinion, has been given to the fact that, as compared with the *Persae*, the *Suppliants* is truly *dramatic*: not only the winning of asylum from Pelasgos but the sharp conflict with the Herald of the Egyptians show a tension and dramatic suspense quite absent from the relatively 'static' *Persae*. The domination of the chorus (and thus the 'lyric' character of the play) is explained by the chorus's dramatic role: it is the play's true protagonist. But perhaps most important of all as an argument for late dating is the conception of Zeus set forth ll. 85ff and 524ff.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Lesky's discussion of the literature (*op.cit.* 11 n.2). When all is said and done, we have no objective grounds for dating the play. That it shows a conception of Zeus later than that of the *Oresteia* seems to me as improbable as that it shows one earlier than that of the *Seven*. The purely *stylistic* peculiarities of the play do not really help us with the date. I think the most persuasive argument for dating the *Prometheus* very close to the *Suppliants* has been advanced by R. D. Murray Jr. (*The Motif of Io in Aeschylus' SUPPLIANTS* [1958] 48-55 and Appendix A pp. 88-97). The similarity of themes (especially Io) is close. I think also that Murray's whole argument (though perhaps overly schematic) is quite convincing.



the war and the nuptial murder which presumably ensues in the following play (*Aegyptioi*) are clearly great crimes. But the one innocent party, Hypermnestra, is defended by Aphrodite herself, presumably with the full support of Zeus. Here a family dispute involving great danger to a *polis* (Argos) is overcome through the support of human innocence by the Olympians. There is, so far as we know, no family curse (in the sense of the *Seven* or *Oresteia*) but there is at least a set of family wrongs which is overcome by a combination of human morality and divine assistance. There is a clear distinction of the guilty and the innocent and an equally clear theodicy.<sup>17</sup>

The problem of the *Prometheia* is concerned with gods rather than men. It seems evident by now (though there is never really such a thing as 'true' or admitted 'progress' in the understanding of the classics) that the *Prometheus Bound* is genuine Aeschylus and that he clearly did not intend (as e.g. Farnell thought) to represent Zeus as a simply immoral divinity.<sup>18</sup> He is however a 'new' god without (as yet) true compassion or true justice. We cannot strain the play to the point of eliminating the evident injustice with which Zeus has dealt with both Prometheus and mankind. Yet is it almost unimaginable that Aeschylus would have depicted Zeus in this way, had he not had in mind a moral resolution of some sort. The very emphasis of the *Prometheus Bound* — e.g. the obviously sympathetic

<sup>17</sup>See the reconstruction of the Danaid trilogy by Emily A. Wolff (*op.cit.*). This seems to me most doubtful at several places, especially in her tentative assumption that the 'reconciliation' with which the trilogy ends demanded no trial or 'punishment' of the guilty Danaids but a kind of 'kindly compulsion.' She misses the true point at issue when she says: 'With our modern attitude toward romantic love, we are apt to think of the bride-race as a punishment,' and then suggests that 'the Danaids are precious prizes for whom their suitors compete freely.' But the fact is that they commit a *crime* (by murdering their husbands) which cannot be left unpunished. Somehow the difference between Hypermnestra and the other Danaids had to be made clear.

<sup>18</sup>L. R. Farnell, "The Paradox of the *Prometheus Vinculus*" (*JHS* 53 [1933] 40-50). Cf. Kitto's reply to Farnell (*JHS* 54 [1934] 14-20) and Lesky, *op. cit.* 80-1. H. Lloyd-Jones ("Zeus in Aeschylus," *JHS* 76 [1956] 55-67) suggests that Zeus simply did a 'deal' with Prometheus and that there was no 'change' of character. But Lloyd-Jones' view of Aeschylus' Zeus and of Aeschylean ethics and religion is hardly tenable, as I think. He wholly denies that Aeschylus' conception of Zeus contains anything 'that is new'. In fact, to Lloyd-Jones Aeschylus is no different from Hesiod or Homer and all talk of Aeschylus' 'theology' is so much fatuity. There is a certain plausibility in Lloyd-Jones' argument: it is, we may say, an argument of the hard-boiled, no-nonsense variety. But it would reduce Aeschylus to a very mediocre figure.

way in which the Oceanides, Io and Prometheus himself are depicted and the obvious harshness of Hermes — point to the 'problematic' character of the whole trilogy: it is, in other words, a play about competing rights and wrongs which are, for that very reason, real rights and wrongs. Zeus, at the start of the play, is acting much like Chronos and Ouranos; despite the wise advice and aid of Prometheus, he still depends on force and brute power and scarcely at all on justice and morality. If he continues as he has begun, there seems to be no reason why the Curse (*Ara*) of the vanquished Chronos will not finally work his overthrow. Prometheus, in his turn, rejoices in this prospect: he envisages and desires no other future but that revealed to him by his mother Themis. He disdains the mediation of Oceanus. His knowledge of the secret of the curse (Thetis etc.) is thus his main weapon against Zeus' brute power. There is, on neither side, the least concern with accommodation or a viable peace.

Evidently this is a situation which has to be radically changed. If Zeus was to escape the fate as well as the curse of Chronos, he had not merely to learn the Promethean secret but, first, to behave in such a way as to persuade or convert those who did know it. Force alone cannot accomplish this. This is what the *Prometheus Bound* has clearly shown. Thus there is a very good reason to believe that Zeus eventually changes his attitude and obtains by persuasion and justice what he cannot get otherwise. In that case Prometheus will also relent and will accept Zeus' authority fully and freely; there will be no need to help mankind by defying Zeus since Zeus himself will have become both just and philanthropic. Justice then, as Aeschylus seems to see it, is a problem for *both* men and gods; there can be no human morality without a theodicy and no theodicy without a divine drama behind it. In other words: Aeschylus did not simply (like Pindar) deny the 'bad' side of popular religion and mythology or, like Hesiod, set 'moral' and 'amoral' conceptions of the gods in simple juxtaposition; he recognized in the religious traditions a genuine problem, which required a *dramatic* solution. This may not be the 'development' of character at which so many interpreters of the *Prometheia* have boggled but there is no reason why it can not be a dramatic change or decision

that in effect gives us a new Zeus, a Zeus whose authority no longer rests solely on force. Indeed it is difficult to see what else it can be.

So both the trilogy of the *Suppliants* and the trilogy of the *Prometheus Bound* supply us with a true theodicy: in the one case (the *Suppliants* trilogy), the only truly innocent character is recognized and saved by the Olympians; in the other, an ancient Curse is made the vehicle of a shift in inter-divine relations by which essential justice is done to both gods and men. The problem of the innocent or at least partially innocent victim is seen and solved in terms of Olympian morality; the problem of an amoral divine order is solved by the establishment of a moral divine order. In short, the *Suppliants* and the *Prometheus* are parts of trilogies which in effect give moral solutions to the tragic conflict which the *Seven* (and thus the whole trilogy of which it is the conclusion) leaves unsolved.

But was Aeschylus aware of this moral problem when he wrote the *Seven*? The ending seems to show that he was. Τάλαν γένος says one semi-chorus (992): τάλανα παθόν answers the other. The long θρήνος at the end expresses a perplexity at the 'doubtful doom' of man to which the poet as yet sees no answer. It is Ate, cries the chorus, who has pitched her trophy at the seventh gate: Ἄτας τροπαῖον ἐν πύλαις (956). Yet the chorus also knows that it is Apollo himself who has wreaked the havoc there (Messenger speech, 800-2). It is just this sense of frustrated theodicy that the *Seven* reveals and which in fact makes it a tragedy. Eteocles is the good man who wakes from false confidence to ruinous certainty. To Sophocles this was quite enough for a good tragedy and for Aristotle this is the very essence of a good tragedy. But for Aeschylus it was but the first halting step toward the satisfactory conclusion of a trilogy. The *Eumenides* is thus the goal of his dramaturgy but it is, for this very reason, no tragedy.

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# *Leitourgia* and Related Terms

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THE IDEA THAT THE MAN OF MEANS is obligated to expend some of his wealth and time in service to the community is common in almost all periods of history. The services performed vary with era and area. So does the nature of the compulsion: sometimes it is a statutory obligation, sometimes a less formal (though not therefore necessarily less effective) social requirement or expectation.

In the ancient world it was the Greek city-state which extended the concept of compulsory public service beyond military duty and menial labor. The Roman Empire, in its turn, perpetuated this Greek institution, expanding it into a full-fledged system of local administration.

The generic Greek term for such compulsory public service was *leitourgía*. Beginning in the fourth century B.C. (as we shall see below) the term was occasionally applied to religious service, and it is in that sense that the word survives in the modern languages of the Western world.

*Leitourgia* as an institution is discussed in the appropriate places in all the principal handbooks and encyclopedias of classical antiquity. But oddly enough, none of these customary reference works goes into very much detail on the semantic history of the term *leitourgía* and its compounds and derivatives. The only recent study of that kind — and this must surely come as a surprise to most classicists and ancient historians — is that by H. Strathmann (with a section on rabbinical literature by R. Meyer) in G. Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* IV, 4 (1938) 221-38. While this excellent presentation includes representative citations from Greek literature, inscriptions, and papyri, its emphasis is naturally on the Bible and related writings. With Strathmann's analysis as a base, the present article will examine the forms and semantic

history of the *leitourgia* word-group as it appears in secular Greek literature, inscriptions, and papyri of all periods; and will conclude with an inventory of all occurrences in the writers and inscriptions of the classical period, during which the semantic evolution began and was in essence completed.

## I. The *Leitourgia* Word Group

The following terms are found:

ἀλειτούργητος

λειτουργέω and compounds with ἀντι-, ἀπο-, κατα-, προσ-, συλ-, and perhaps ἐκ<sup>1</sup>

λειτούργημα

λειτουργησία and a compound with ἀ-

λειτουργήσιμος

λειτουργία and a compound with ἀ-

λειτουργιακός

λειτουργικός

λειτούργιον

λειτουργός and a compound with ὑπο-

## II. Etymology

The earliest pertinent text is Herodotus 7.197: λήιτον δὲ καλέουσι τὸ πρυτανήιον οἱ Ἀχαιοί.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing further on the subject in the ancient writers till we come to Plutarch, who connects Latin *licitor* with Greek λειτουργός (an erroneous but at the time apparently popular view), remarking ὅτι γὰρ λήιτον ἄχρι νῦν τὸ δημόσιον ἐν πολλοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων νόμων γέγραπται οὐδένα, ὥς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, λέληθε.<sup>3</sup> The same definition of λήιτον (λη-, λη-) is found in three *grammatici* of the imperial period — Ammonius, a contemporary of Plutarch, who cites Didymus (first century B.C.) as his source; the second-century lexicographer Moeris; and Ulpi-

<sup>1</sup>Occurs only in Isaeus 7.40; "suspicionones movit" — Wyse (Cambridge 1904) *ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup>On the significance of this echo from Hellenic prehistory and later misunderstanding (e.g. Hesychius, *s.v.*; Bekker, *Anecd. gr.* I, p. 277), see C. Picard, *Rev. archéol.* 35 (1950) 124-25.

<sup>3</sup>Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 67 (= *Mor.* 280a). Similarly in his *Romulus* 26.4: λήιτον γὰρ τὸ δημόσιον ἔτι νῦν Ἕλληνες καὶ λαὸν τὸ πλῆθος ὀνομάζουσιν.

anus, the third-century commentator on Demosthenes<sup>4</sup> — and it is recorded in the Byzantine lexicons,<sup>5</sup> one of which incorporates in its definition also the term *πρυτανείον*, culled presumably from the Herodotus text cited above.<sup>6</sup>

In short, it was the established view in antiquity that the words of the *leitourgía* group were compounded of the elements “public” + “work”, to signify “work for the people”, hence “service to the state”. Modern scholars find nothing to quarrel with in this. Most present-day etymologists, however, regard the origin of *λῆός* (*λαός*) itself as undetermined.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Ammonius, *Περὶ ὁμοίων καὶ διαφόρων λέξεων*, s.v.: *λητουργεῖν διὰ τοῦ η, καὶ λητουργεῖν διὰ τοῦ ι, διαφέρειν φησὶ Δίδυμος ἐν ὑπομνήματι δευτέρας (l. -έρω?) Ἰλιάδος. τὸ μὲν γὰρ λητουργεῖν, τὸ τῷ δήμῳ ὑπηρετεῖν· λήτον γὰρ φασὶ τὸ δημόσιον. λήϊτον ἀμφεπέροντο [this is obviously a quotation from epic poetry — cf. Homer *Odyssey* 15.467]. τὸ δὲ λητουργεῖν, κατὰ λέγειν (λητ- is here not the iotacized spelling of λειτ-, but a different word: cf. *λαοργός*, *λεουργός* (λεω-), *λιτο(υ)ργός*, *λιωργός*, on which see esp. Hesychius, s.vv.)*

Moeris, *Lexic.* s.v.: *λητουργεῖν διὰ τοῦ η Ἀπτικοί, διὰ δὲ τῆς εἰ διφθόγγου Ἑλληγες λήϊτον γὰρ τὸ δημόσιον*

Ulpianus, *Schol. in Demosth.* 20, p. 512 Dindorf: *λείτον δὲ ἐκάλουν οἱ παλαιοὶ τὸ δημόσιον, ὅθεν λητουργεῖν τὸ εἰς τὸ δημόσιον ἐργάζεσθαι ἔλεγον.*

<sup>5</sup>Hesychius, s.vv.: *λητουργεῖν· λητουργεῖν· λήϊτον γὰρ δημόσιον. λήϊτον· δημόσιον.*

Zonaras, s.v.: *λητουργεῖν τὸ ὑπηρετεῖν, παρὰ τὸ λήϊτον, ὃ ἐστὶ τὸ δημόσιον. ἀπὸ οὖν τοῦ ἔργου καὶ λήϊτον λητουργεῖν, καὶ κατὰ συστολήν τοῦ η εἰς ε λείτουργεῖν, καὶ κατὰ συναίρεσιν τοῦ ε καὶ ι λητουργεῖν. Tittman (Leipzig 1808) brackets the last phrase: cf. n. 6.*

Suidas, s.v.: *λητουργία· κυρίως ἡ δημοσία ὑπηρεσία· παρὰ τὸ λήϊτον καὶ τὸ ἔργον.*

Thomas Magister p. 227, 17 Ritschl: *οἱ μὲν λη(ι)ουργός διὰ τοῦ η, ἦτοι ὁ τὰ λήϊτα ἔργον ἔχων· λήϊτα γὰρ λέγεται τὰ δημόσια· οἱ δὲ διὰ διφθόγγου.*

Bekker, *Anecd. gr.* I, p. 277: *λητουργεῖν· οἱ παλαιοὶ Ἀθηναῖοι διὰ τοῦ η ἔλεγον λητουργεῖν· λητὸς (sic) γὰρ ἐστὶ δημόσιον ἀρχεῖον [this word is intrusive: cf. *supra*, n. 2]. οἱ οὖν ἐν τῷ λητῷ ἐργαζόμενοι οὗτοι λητουργοῦσιν, ὅπερ νῦν διὰ τῆς εἰ διφθόγγου λέγεται. διφθόγγου λέγεται.*

<sup>6</sup>*Etym. Magnum*, s.v.: *λητουργός, ὁ τοῖς διοικηταῖς ὑπουργῶν καὶ διακονῶν. τὸ γὰρ πρυτανεῖον, ἧγουν τὸ δημόσιον, λήϊτον ἐκαλεῖτο. ἐκ τοῦ λήϊτον οὖν καὶ το(ῦ) ἔργον γίνεταί κατὰ συστολήν λείτουργός· καὶ κατὰ συναίρεσιν τοῦ ε καὶ ι εἰς τὴν εἰ δίφθογγον. καὶ λητουργεῖν, τὸ ὑπηρετεῖν.*

<sup>7</sup>Thus E. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*<sup>4</sup> (Heidelberg 1950) and J. B. Hofmann, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen* (Munich 1949) s.v. *λαός* (so too L. Meyer, *Handbuch der griechischen Etymologie* IV [Leipzig 1902] 498). A. Juret, *Dictionnaire étymologique grec et latin* (Mâcon 1942) 178–79, associates *λαός* and *λητουργία* with *λέγειν* and other Indo-European words constituting the semantic category “assembler, groupe social, tas, multitude,” reasserting herein an antiquated view that dates back at least to the eighteenth century (cf. e.g. J. D. van Lennep, *Etymologicum linguae graecae* [Utrecht 1790]).



### III. Spelling

In *koinē* Greek the spelling was  $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau$ -, which vulgar speech iotacized to  $\lambda\iota\tau$ -. But postclassical writers were aware that classical Athens wrote  $\lambda\eta\iota\tau$ -.<sup>8</sup> When and how did the change take place?

Two views of the change are found in the ancient grammarians and lexicographers cited in notes 4-6. One view was that  $\eta\ddot{i}$  shortened to  $\epsilon\ddot{i}$ , which was then amalgamated into the diphthong  $\epsilon\iota$ . The other view appears to have been that the progression was  $\eta\iota > \eta > \epsilon\iota$ .<sup>9</sup>

In the light of epigraphical and papyrological evidence available to modern scholars, the processes of the vocalic and orthographic changes involved can be reconstructed more completely, *viz.*: presumably original disyllabic  $\eta\ddot{i} >$  diphthong  $\eta\iota$ , which came to be pronounced  $\bar{\epsilon}$ , then written  $\eta$  or  $\epsilon\iota$ , later pronounced  $\bar{i}$  and sometimes written  $\iota$  (iotacism). Before dealing specifically with the  $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\omicron\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$  word-group, it will be useful to summarize the evidence on these vowel changes in general.<sup>10</sup>

$\eta\iota > \eta$

Inscriptional evidence for the silencing of the iota in  $\eta\iota$  begins, at least in Ionic, as early as the sixth century B.C.<sup>11</sup> The change is in evidence in Attica in the fifth century, and in Thessaly in the fourth century. Subsequently it is visible also in inscriptions from Pergamum and Magnesia, and in papyri from Ptolemaic Egypt.

$\eta\iota > \epsilon\iota$

Inscriptions from Athens and elsewhere (e.g. Amphipolis, Eretria, Olynthus, Oropus) show signs of this change from *ca.* 400

<sup>8</sup>Cf. *supra*, nn. 5 and 6. There was also minor dialectal variation in the vowel of the second syllable. *IG* VII, 3083 (Boeotia, third century B.C.) has  $\omega$ . *IG* II<sup>2</sup>, 1140 and 1147 (Attica, fourth century B.C.) have  $\omicron$ , but omicron frequently represented  $\omicron\upsilon$  in inscriptions of that period.

<sup>9</sup>For a brief summary on these transformations of  $\eta\iota$ , cf. M. Lejeune, *Traité de phonétique grecque*<sup>2</sup>, (Paris 1955) 196. The essential evidence is cited below.

<sup>10</sup>Bibliography: E. Schwyzler, *Griechische Grammatik* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft II.1) I (Munich 1939) 193, 200-2; E. Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit* I (Berlin and Leipzig 1923) 74-80, 87-92, 122-28; L. R. Palmer, *A Grammar of Post-Ptolemaic Papyri* I (London 1946) 1-3. These standard works give summaries of the relevant data and bibliographies of earlier specialized studies; to the latter should be added B. Bondesson, *De sonis et formis titulorum Milesiorum Didymaeorumque* (Lund 1936), esp. pp. 55-59.

<sup>11</sup>Linguistic evidence points to the disappearance of the iota in "Inlaut" already in prehistoric times: cf. Schwyzler, *op. cit.* 200.

B.C. It is impossible to tell how much earlier the change actually began, because in the earlier period E represented both  $\epsilon$  and  $\eta$  in most Greek inscriptions. The earliest clear case is *IG* II<sup>2</sup>, 1414, which has  $\kappa\lambda\eta\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  in line 44 and  $\kappa\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  in line 47.

$\eta = \epsilon\iota$

Inscriptions and papyri show the equivalence of these two sounds and the interchange of these spellings from the third century B.C. on.

$\epsilon\iota = \iota$

Argive and Boeotian inscriptions show signs of iotacism as early as the fifth century B.C. Attic inscriptions and papyri show the tendency fully established in the third century B.C., as do inscriptions of the second century B.C. from Delphi, Magnesia, and Pergamum.

The above changes are well exemplified by the *leitourgia* word-group, as can be seen at a glance from the following chart:

SPELLING	EARLIEST OCCURRENCE		LATEST OCCURRENCE	
	DOCUMENT	PLACE AND DATE	DOCUMENT	PLACE AND DATE
$\lambda\eta\iota\tau$ -	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> , 1140	Athens, 386 B.C.	<i>PSI</i> 435	Egypt, 258/7 B.C.
$\lambda\eta\tau$ -	<i>SIG</i> <sup>3</sup> , 344 = Welles, <i>Royal</i> <i>Corr.</i> 3	Teos, 303 B.C.	Sardis VII, 2	Sardis, ca. 225/175 B.C.
$\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau$ -	<i>IG</i> II <sup>2</sup> , 305	Athens, before 336 B.C.		**
$\lambda\iota\tau$ -	<i>PPetrie</i> II, 4(9) = III, 42C(2)	Egypt, 255 B.C.		**

\*\* These spellings continued through antiquity to modern times.

In order to illustrate the spelling variations which took place in the living language, the chart above is compiled exclusively from contemporary documents — *i.e.* inscriptions and papyri. It is clear from these that  $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau$ - was the standard spelling from about 300 B.C. on, and that  $\lambda\eta\iota\tau$ - and  $\lambda\eta\tau$ - disappeared from ordinary usage in the next hundred years or so. But copyists continued for a few centuries longer to reproduce the older spelling in works of literature. The latest such survivals<sup>12</sup> are found in the papyrus MS of Aristotle's

<sup>12</sup>Not counting, of course, the Byzantine lexicographers, who record these long-vanished forms as a matter of philological history.

*Constitution of Athens*, a copy made *ca.* 100 A.D., which has ληιτ- in all occurrences (once, in § 56, corrected from λειτ-); and in British Museum Papyrus 132, a first-century copy of Isocrates *Or.* 8, which has λητ-,<sup>13</sup> as well as λειτουργιων corrected from λιτουργειων, and probably λιτ-.<sup>14</sup> A fragment of Hyperides written in the late second or early third century shows only λειτ-,<sup>15</sup> and an early-third-century copyist of Demosthenes *Or.* 21 consistently writes λιτ-.<sup>16</sup>

An unfortunate by-product of recent times is worth noting. Ever since it became apparent that the older spelling persisted in Attic inscriptions through most of the fourth century,<sup>17</sup> modern editors of classical authors earlier than Aristotle have generally printed λητ- where the codices, being of late date, have λειτ-. Whether this is necessary or even justifiable in all cases is, to begin with, questionable, since (as we have seen) in the same body of Attic inscriptions the spelling λειτ- appears already in the mid-fourth century and other instances of ηι > ει go back at least to *ca.* 400 B.C. But, what is worse, some editors have not always been consistent in emending to λητ-. The result — most apparent in the Attic orators, who use the *leitourgia* terminology most frequently — has been to deposit a legacy of enormous confusion in the editions of the last seventy-five years. To cite but a few examples among many: In his *Andocides*, Blass prints λητουργεῖν in 1.132 (codd. λειτ-), but leaves λειτουργίαι in 4.42. In his *Isocrates* he has changed the spelling in some places and left λειτ- in others, without explanation; and Preuss' *Index Isocrateus* faithfully reproduces Blass' spellings. In his *Demosthenes* Blass consistently prints λητ- (but κλείς, not κλής!), but in only five of the more than one hundred occurrences does he indicate in the apparatus that the codices have λειτ-; the unwary or unwarned reader is thus left with the false impression

<sup>13</sup>Similarly, λησταις in a first-century copy of Hyperides (*British Museum Papyrus* 108 + 115), but ληιστου in the second-century Didymus scholia (*PBerol.* 9780). Cf. the first- and second-century authors quoted in note 4, and Quintilian 1.7.17: [iota] quibusdam etiam interponunt, ut in ΑΗΙΣΤΗΙ, quia etymologia ex divisione in tris syllabas facta desideret eam litteram.

<sup>14</sup>*Journal of Philology* 30 (1907) 6, 11, 74.

<sup>15</sup>*POxy* 1607, line 20.

<sup>16</sup>*POxy* 1378, lines 8, 18, 19.

<sup>17</sup>The latest is *IG II<sup>2</sup>*, 417, which dates from some time after 330 B.C.



that in the other instances the codices have λητ-. In the Budé edition of Isocrates, Mathieu and Brémond mostly printed λητ- in Volume I (1928), but in Volumes II (1938) and III (1942) they abandoned this practice, apparently deeming it unnecessary, and reverted to the λειτ- of the codices.

#### IV. Semantics

When the term *leitourgia* first appears in Greek literature it refers to specific state services required of wealthy citizens and residents. At Athens, to which most of the evidence of the classical period pertains, the major liturgies were equipping and manning a trireme of the fleet (*trierarchia*), and providing a chorus for a dramatic festival (*choregia*); less important — and less expensive — were a number of other functions, mainly in connection with religious ceremonies (e.g. *gymnasiarchia*, *lampadarchia*).

From this original use as a political *terminus technicus* (**a**),<sup>18</sup> the term began, toward the end of the fifth century and increasingly in the fourth,<sup>19</sup> to be used in the broadened sense (**b**) of any service to the community. The line of distinction between meanings **a** and **b** is sometimes difficult to discern, especially in the rhetorical language of the orators; examples will be noted below.

From meanings **a** and **b** *leitourgia* began in the fourth century to be used in a still more generalized sense (**c**), *viz.* to designate a service of any kind, for any beneficiary, not necessarily for the benefit of the community.<sup>20</sup>

Within the generalized sense **c**, there developed two important specializations of meaning:

**d** — cultic service to divinity. This meaning, which also makes

<sup>18</sup>The designations **a-d** used in this section correspond to those of Strathmann, *loc. cit.* 223-25.

<sup>19</sup>Strathmann's generally excellent analysis is defective on this point. Finding meaning **b** "ganz besonders . . . in den Papyri" (p. 224), he cites examples only from papyri, none earlier than the second century B.C.

<sup>20</sup>As Strathmann expresses it (*ibid.*), the λήϊτος element becomes "völlig verblasst" in popular usage. The verb χορηγέω underwent similar generalization: cf. Liddell-Scott-Jones, *s.v.*

its first appearance in fourth-century literature,<sup>21</sup> was carried through the Septuagint into Christian usage, where it still remains today.

**e**<sup>22</sup> — engineer or sapper service in the military forces. The earliest extant examples of this meaning are in *PCairo Zenon* 59015 verso (= *Sammelbuch* 6782) and *PHibeh* 96, both of 259/8 B.C.

The following list shows the distribution of the different meanings in the extant occurrences of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.<sup>23</sup> Under **a** and **b** the texts refer to Athens unless otherwise noted; instances of general language, specific to no particular city, are indicated by the symbol \*. Passages which illustrate the broadening in sense from **a** to **b** are identified thus:

† — The passage uses the term in sense **a** with an overtone of **b**, or vice versa.

‡ — The same passage uses the term once in sense **a** and again in sense **b**.

### Sense a

#### FIFTH CENTURY

Antiphon 5.77† (Mytilene and Athens)

Isocrates 18.58, 60, 64

Lysias 20.23; 21.5, 12, 13, 16, 19‡, 23; 32.24

#### FOURTH CENTURY

Aeschines 1.97, 101

Andocides 1.132‡; 4.42

Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 27.3, 56.3; *Oec.* 1347 a 12, 14, 1352 a 4(Caria); *Pol.\** 1309 a 18, 1320 b 4‡; *Rhet.* 1399 a 34<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Here again as in **b** (cf. *supra* n. 19), Strathmann cites no occurrences earlier than the second century B.C. He appears to regard Aristotle, *Politics* 7, 1330a8-13 as a mixture of meanings **a** and **d**. He ignores Demosthenes 21.56. There is also a clearcut case in *PSI* 435 of 258/7 B.C., on which cf. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (London 1927) 154-158 = *Licht vom Osten*<sup>4</sup>, pp. 123-125.

<sup>22</sup>Strathmann does not make a separate category of this meaning, though he remarks (p. 224) that it, like **d**, is a "Spezialfall" of **c**.

<sup>23</sup>The material of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, already collected, will be the subject of a separate article. In searching the sources I had the welcome assistance of Dr. M. Reinhold for the literature and Dr. R. K. Sherk for the inscriptions. Their assistance was made possible by a grant from the American Philosophical Society, which is here acknowledged with gratitude.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. the anonymous commentator, Berlin ed. Vol. XXI (2), pp. 323 §15, 325 §17.

Demosthenes 5.8; 18.91 (Byzantium, Perinthus), 104, 108, 267; 19.282; 20.1, 8, 18–23, 28<sup>25</sup>, 40, 126–130, 151; 21.11, 14, 56<sup>26</sup>, 61, 108, 126, 151–155, 158, 165, 167, 169, 171, 189, 225; 25.29, 76, 78; 27.64; 28.3, 17, 19, 24; 29.24; 36.39–40, 42; 38.25–26; 39.9; 42.3, 21–23, 25; 45.66, 78; 47.48, 54; 50.9, 21, 31, 39–40, 58, 66; 51.7, 17; 52.26; 59.117; prooem. 48.3<sup>27</sup>  
 Isaeus 3.80; 4.27; 5.29, 36, 39, 45; 6.38, 60–61, 64; 7.5, 38, 40, 42; 11.40, 48–50; fragg. 22 Thalheim (= 1 Sauppe), 29 Thalheim (= 34 Forster = 130 Sauppe)  
 Isocrates 8.13†, 20†, 128; 12.145; 15.5, 145–146, 150, 154, 158; 16.32, 35; 19.36 (Siphnus)  
 Lycurgus, *Leocr.* 139  
 Lysias 3.47†; 7.31; 18.7†; 19.58; 25.12; 26.3–4; 29.4  
 Theophrastus, *Char.* 23.7; 26.6  
 Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.7.6  
 IG II<sup>2</sup>, 305<sup>28</sup>, 417, 1140, 1147

### Sense b

#### FIFTH CENTURY

Lysias 21.19†; 31.12, 15

#### FOURTH CENTURY<sup>29</sup>

Aeneas Tacticus 13\*

Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 29.5†; *Eth. Nicom.* 1167 b 12; *Eth. Eudem.* 1242 b 30; *Pol.* 1272 a 20<sup>30</sup> (Crete); *Pol.\** 1278 a 12<sup>31</sup>, 1279 a 11, 1291 a 33–38<sup>32</sup>, 1305 a 5<sup>32</sup>, 1314 b 14<sup>32</sup>, 1321 a 33

Aristoxenus, frag. 35 Wehrli

Demosthenes 10.28†; 22.65; 24.172; prooem. 14.2

Isaeus 4.29<sup>32</sup>; frag. 30 (= 35 Forster = 131 Sauppe)

Isocrates 3.56; 7.25

Lysias 18.7†

Plato, *Laws* 12, 949C\*

<sup>25</sup>In some codices.

<sup>26</sup>*Double entendre* with sense **d**: cf. Pollux, *Onom.* 3.143, which refers to this passage: ἐπὶ τῶν μουσικῶν (sc. ἀγώνων) ἴδιον, ὃ φησι Δημοσθένης, τὸ λειτουργεῖν τῷ θεῷ.

<sup>27</sup>The terms *leitourgia*, etc., are commented on frequently by the scholiasts to Demosthenes, viz.: Schol. ed. Dindorf, pp. 72, 108–10, 155–56, 233, 458†–59, 462, 466–69, 471, 473–75, 480–81, 483–84, 488, 512–14, 579–80, 627–29, 631 (line 14), 636, 645; Schol. Patmiaka, in *BCH* 1 (1877) 147; also *hypotheses oratt.* 20 and 42.

<sup>28</sup>This inscription is too mutilated for a definite determination, but since the stone contains a state decree the sense is probably **a** rather than **b**.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. also Schol. Demosth. ed. Dindorf, p. 591, lines 10–12 (τὴν ἐπιβάλλουσαν πένησι λειτουργίαν ἐπλήρωσε· λειτουργία δὲ πένητος ἢ διὰ τοῦ σώματος εἰσφορά), and p. 631, lines 17ff.

<sup>30</sup>Possibly sense **d** here: cf. 1330 a 12.

<sup>31</sup>Sense **c** followed by **b**.

<sup>32</sup>Erroneously listed by Strathmann under sense **a**.

*Sense c*

## FOURTH CENTURY

Aristotle,<sup>33</sup> *Animal. incessu* 711 b 30; *Eth. Nicom.* 1163 a 29; *Eth. Eudem.* 1242 b 17; *Iuv. et senect.* 469 a 3; *Oec.* 1343 b 20; *Part. animal.* 650 a 9, 674 b 9, 20, 689 b 29; *Pol.* 1278 a 12<sup>31</sup>, 1335 b 28

[Demosthenes] 50.35<sup>34</sup>

Hyperides, *Lycophr.* App. frag. 1 Colin = *POxy* 1607, lines 20–21

Isocrates 15.156

*Sense d*

## FOURTH CENTURY

Aristotle, *Pol.* 1330 a 13<sup>\*35</sup>

Demosthenes 21.56<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Cf. also the anonymous commentator, Berlin ed. Vol. XXI (2), p.19.

<sup>34</sup>Denouncing a well-paid and well-treated trireme crew as *ειωθὸς . . . ἀτελείας ἄγειν τῶν νομιζομένων ἐν τῇ νηὶ λειτουργιῶν*, the language (note especially the underlined words) has all the solemnity of sense *a*, but it is used here perhaps in sense *b*, more likely in sense *c* with possibly an overtone of *b*.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. note 30.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. note 26.



# Libanius, *On the Silence of Socrates*

## A First Translation and an Interpretation

*Michael Crosby and William M. Calder III*

LIBANIUS (314–ca 393 A.D.), the last great pagan rhetorician and sophist, was born of a wealthy and distinguished Antioch family. In autumn 336 he began four years of somewhat reluctant study at Athens under the sophist, Diophantus. In 340 he traveled through Greece and the north. After an unsuccessful attempt in Constantinople he opened a school of rhetoric in 346 at Nīkomedeia. Among his pupils was Celsus. The young Julian, in Nīkomedeia at the time, dared not hear him, fearing the wrath of Constantine. After a brief and not entirely unsuccessful career in the civil service, Libanius returned to Antioch in 354 where he lived and taught until his death. An intimate already of Julian and his circle, he quickly became the most distinguished sophist of his day. Among his pupils were the Christians, John Chrysostom, to whom Libanius would have bequeathed his school “if the Christians had not won him,” Theodore of Mopsuestia, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzene, and perhaps Ammianus Marcellinus.

Libanius was a voluminous writer and a number of his public orations have been preserved. Some, e.g., his Praise of Antioch, are of considerable historical value as well as literary merit. Fifty-one school declamations are extant and 143 “model essays” (progymnastika). There are also his Demosthenic hypoteseis and his biography of the orator written for his friend, the Proconsul Montius. There are 1605 Greek letters preserved under his name. Of especial interest is his autobiography (Oratio 1).

Throughout his writings he reveals considerable familiarity with classical authors, especially Demosthenes, Isocrates, Aeschines, Thucydides, Herodotus, Plato, the comic and tragic poets, Homer, and Pindar. There is a fairly strict avoidance of hiatus. His clausulae are regularly quantitative rather than accentual. He strives for good Attic but often his syntax is contorted. His conditions do not always fit into classical patterns and he is vague in his use of particles. He is fortunate in having had excellent editors (Reiske and Förster).

W. M. C.

## Translation

IT IS DIFFICULT in your presence to say anything, even of what's wholly just, in behalf of Socrates, for you have condemned him out of prejudice and have believed the original slanderous attacks made on him. Nevertheless, since the informers have gone to extremes and have treated unjustly not only Socrates but also a law<sup>1</sup> which applies to all unlucky men, it is necessary to say this much to you, that although many men were condemned by you in the past and were executed unjustly or justly, none died in silence.

[2] You ordered Socrates to die and he obeys quite meekly, but these men have imposed on him a second penalty, namely to keep silent before his death and to converse with no one, thus killing him even before the hemlock does. Now this is easy for Socrates, for just as he can speak, so he can be quiet; but you must beware lest you be blamed by gods and men for taking away from Socrates a good shared by all who are still alive and depriving him at once of his body and, before that, of his voice.<sup>2</sup>

[3] I am one of those who go to Socrates regularly for instruction and listen to him. For indeed it is wonderful how he philosophizes in prison and dies joyfully; and I stood up to oppose the man who spoke this harsh judgement, believing that it would be not his loss but ours if we were not to have some small benefit from the last days of Socrates.<sup>3</sup>

[4] In truth, contrary to all that is just, Socrates has been falsely accused and has been pressed with charges which are untrue and most unworthy of his philosophy. He will die who was the most godfearing of all men, of all men the most helpful to the young, who was always obedient to the laws of the city both as a citizen and as a soldier, but opposed himself to the tyrants and the oligarchies, who alone did not require the payment of fees from those who came to him for instruction, who to the best of his ability not

<sup>1</sup>For the law, cf. 8 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup>The Greek is awkward here.

<sup>3</sup>Libanius uses Socrates' name with greater frequency than is elegant in English.

only was master of his own evil inclinations but also made many others into good men, and has caused his city to be renowned and to be admired by Greece, both through the visitors who gather around him and through his words, which issue forth from him in all directions.

[5] Indeed, I believe that time and the gods will show that Socrates is such a man and has been falsely accused, and that the jury brought in its verdict sooner than was right; and I pray that this will happen without divine retribution and without public harm to the city. And this I know well, that those who judged Socrates would have repented of their decision if they had been afforded the opportunity of pronouncing a second time, just as you once did regarding Mytilene.

[6] But after those prevailed who bore Socrates ill-will because he might yet refute their arguments, you heard him discussing philosophy even in court; for he did not weep nor beg nor devise an escape, a shameful thing and unworthy of philosophy; but he obeyed the god who has led him to this end, and he happily followed the Eleven and went to prison as joyfully as he would the Lyceum, the Academy, the Ilissus or his other resorts; and there he was ready to engage in conversation. Could it be otherwise with a man who still lived and breathed? And eagerly he joined with his friends in the pursuit of wisdom, for he is Socrates; and though he was imprisoned he was not dismayed by mere physical misfortune, and his conversation was so godly and beautiful that if you had all heard it you would undoubtedly have released him.

[7] Socrates is to be congratulated that, with death standing beside him, he rejoices and ungrudgingly talks and discusses philosophy with those who listen to him and are able to gain some profit to serve them throughout their lives. But Anytus and Meletus were harsher even than the jailer. He has allowed Socrates visitors, but they have rendered his time of grace useless to us and have contrived these new bonds for him; not only are Socrates' hands and feet bound before his death, but also his tongue.

[8] O what malice! What stupidity! What ignorant wickedness!

Shall Socrates not speak, Apollo, even though he is still alive and possesses the faculty of speech? But this present day Solon is writing a statute "against a man", a thing expressly and distinctly forbidden by the laws — "Nor to write a law or statute against a man, unless it apply in common to all Athenians."<sup>4</sup>

[9] "He is wicked and has been condemned." Granted "he is wicked." Let no word of the indictment or of the clamoring of Anytus and Meletus be disbelieved. I know well that there will be a time in which you will revere Socrates, as the Ephesians do Heraclitus, and the Samians Pythagoras, and the Lacedaemonians Chilon, and the Milesians Thales, and the Lesbians Pittacus, and the Corinthians Periander, and you yourselves once Solon. For while they are alive, wise men are opposed by the ill-will of those near them; but, when they have died, their wisdom is judged solely from impressions formed without prejudice.

[10] Very well then, let the decision which has been reached stand. In that case it is fitting that judgment be given in accordance with the decision of the court. It was decided that Socrates should drink hemlock just like any of the others who had been condemned before him. Socrates does not refuse to do this nor would he at any time flee the penalty you have imposed upon him, nor leave the city even if, among his friends, some wish to carry him off to Boeotia, others to the Peloponnesus, and others to Thessaly, and all the cities of Greece call him; nor would he permit a stolen deliverance. Quite the reverse; somehow or other he desires his death more than you do and he thirsts after the hemlock.

[11] Is it not illegal and reprehensible after the verdict to pass in a decree an additional sentence, which was not passed by the jury and is not specified in the laws dealing with the condemned? It is not necessary for everyone to bestow on the condemned more kindness than is required by law, nor, on the other hand, to be harsher than is customary. For each of these things, both to inflict

<sup>4</sup>The Greek is obscure. I have followed οὗτος for τοιοῦτον (T. A. Suits *per litt.*) and deleted the interrogation point. B. Otis suggests ἀπα or ἀπ for ἀλλ' and renders "Is it Solon then who prescribes such a law of attainder?" The sense of the whole then becomes "Socrates not to speak? Is it Solon then who forbids him? No the prohibition lies in the face of the [Solonian] constitution."



additional penalties on the condemned and to take away what is suitable to those in such a situation, is against the law. Moreover, the court herald did not announce that the Eleven were to take charge of Socrates and order him to be quiet until his death, and not to speak, but only to die.

[12] And you, accusers of Socrates, when you determined upon the penalty of death for him, did not add also that of silence. For in that case there would be two penalties. Furthermore, that additional penalty which you did not impose at the very height of the jury's rage of delusion, you now devise in excess of all previous laws.

[13] Now if Socrates is guilty of some newer crime and you are bringing charges against him after the verdict of the jury, over and above what was previously noted in the indictment, tell us so; explain. If your complaint is that he talks and chats, who in the world was ever punished for that? Was silence ever one of the prohibitions imposed on a condemned man? Who was brought before the people for talking? Did anyone of those condemned to die at Athens ever have his tongue cut off? You are making us Thracians instead of Athenians and instead of Greeks, barbarians.

[14] Once Miltiades also was imprisoned among you; but though imprisoned he was not silent. Once you condemned nine generals who were innocent against the will of Socrates and without his participating in that lawless action (on the contrary he thought that the law was more important than anger). You condemned them, but you did not order even them to be silent.

[15] This is indeed a sorry situation: murderers and robbers of temples and traitors and men who have dared to commit the greatest crimes pay the penalty, but are ordered by no one to be silent and not to converse. Some give solemn instructions to those dearest to them, some converse with their immediate family, some with friends and relatives, some call upon the gods, some bemoan their fate; but in this one case alone out of all history will it occur that a man condemned to die, but most worthy of talking, was ordered not to talk.

[16] Critias alone, when he was one of the tyrants, gave Socrates orders to refrain from conversation; Critias, who, proving to be an unsatisfactory pupil, condemned Socrates. And so the democracy has become an imitator of the tyranny and in making this judgement Athenians are enacting laws equal to the edicts of the tyrants.

[17] And yet Critias forbade Socrates conversation only with young men, but not altogether, so long as he avoided analogies involving shepherds and herdsmen, being angry with the Socratic analogy that it was the part of bad shepherds to reduce the flock, a statement which Socrates really did make in denunciation of the tyrants. But you refuse Socrates all conversation, either with the jailer or with Xanthippe or with his little children. But if Lamprocles or Sophroniscus asks his father a question, will Socrates make no answer, but only await the hemlock with a bit in his mouth, deprived of the common freedom of all men, even the unlucky and the wicked?

[18] Man is by nature a talkative creature, and the people of Athens are especially talkative and in love with talk. And when death is near they are gripped by a certain garrulousness and a desire to say and hear many things, since in a short time their powers to do so will be at an end. For it is no reproach to say as much as you like when soon you will keep a long silence.

[19] "Let Socrates await the hemlock in silence," he says, "for Theramenes also died in silence." But before he died Theramenes said many things at the council hearth. And when some 1500 men drank the hemlock under the oligarchy, not one of whom died because of Socrates, he was ordered to go to Leon the Salaminian; but he would not obey nor bring the man to the tyrants to be executed. Although those who perished at that time were so many, none is said to have drunk the potion in silence. Not a man was ordered to keep back a single word or protest before his death, not by Dracontides, or Pison, or Charicles, or any of the others.

[20] But you are giving Socrates here an order much crueller than the actions of the harshest tyranny. Men must cry out when they are under the surgeon's knife, and in prison a man will weep. But shall he, who will soon lose his very life, die without echoing

a single word to a single person and will be even before his death a lifeless corpse? You are causing Socrates to die many times.

[21] The philosophers say that ghosts have voices and that this property is left even to shades, and Homer too seems to indicate this. For when he describes the appearance of the shade of Patroclus, he says that it is altogether the same as before both in body and in voice. But you are cutting the voice out of Socrates while he is still alive. All other men are unusually talkative in time of misfortune. It is said that the son of Croesus the Lydian, though dumb before, broke into speech at a time of danger for his father. Shall Socrates alone in his present circumstance neither weep nor call upon the gods?

[22] Now this is not Socratic behavior. Even he should be guaranteed his common rights. But everyone else who is in prison talks and chats, and each, when he is near death, even if he is an unschooled layman, philosophizes on the subject of death itself. Shall not Socrates then be allowed to end his life and his philosophy together?

[23] "He says things which are neither meet nor just." This is their contention. Is it not indeed for this reason that he is to be put to death? Since you have no further charge to add to the one on which he was convicted, do not inflict on him a penalty greater than what was prescribed. "But he corrupts the young." But what young boy has entered the prison? Apollodorus and Crito and Phaedo and Simmias and Cebes, Hermogenes, old men, are the disciples of Socrates. If Socrates' conversation is evil and harmful, surely these men were corrupted long ago. But if it is good and profitable, it is not just at this time to deprive them of it.

[24] Therefore leave him alone and do not stand in his way. Is it not disgraceful that Gorgias and Protagoras speak and Polus and Prodicus the quack, and Hippias, sophists, word peddlers, and that Greeks pay money to listen to them publicly and privately, men who are Eleans and Ceans and Aberites and Leontines, but that the Athenian Socrates must even before his death remain silent?

[25] You will have your fill of silence from Socrates, you slanderers. Not only will the Lyceum be dumb but also the Academy, and the wrestling grounds will be mute. Rudeness and silence will choke the conversations of the noble. Not in the gymnasiums will Socrates speak, not in the colonnades, not in the Royal Stoa will he converse with people, not in the Painted Hall, not at the money-changers' tables, not in the courts, not in the house of Agathon, not in the house of Callias, not in the house of Damon, not in the city, not in the Peiraeus, not by the Ilissus under the beautiful plane tree, but there the cicadas will sing, not at Potidaea, not at Delium, not on justice with Thrasymachus, not on moderation with Charmides, not on courage with Laches, not on brotherly love with Chaerephon, not on virtue with Meno, not on the beautiful with Hippias, not on rhetoric with Gorgias, not with Protagoras on the practice of virtue, not on piety with Euthyphro, not with Xenophon on not kissing the beautiful boy. You will have your fill of the absence of Socrates. He will keep a long silence for you.

[26] Now, while he is still with us give him these one or two days to talk. Now especially is the wisdom of Socrates put to the test, if in bonds he is not pained and though about to die he does not wail, and philosophizes with death upon him. Let him speak though he be in bonds. I praised Xenophon too, because, when imprisoned in Thebes, he did not neglect the discourses of Prodicus but posted bail and went to hear him. Do you think that the pupil should be a better philosopher than the teacher, and do you force Socrates to be silent when he will cease so soon? Why do you make him resemble a man in grief? Surely, let him speak before the end, since he is all the nearer to the truth.

[27] Let him now discuss philosophy. I also ask you to let him make a prophecy. Swans sing before their death and let go their lives in song, and musical is the death of a musical bird. Allow to sing both the Attic nightingale and the swan. Socrates is a fellow slave along with them and he is blessed of Apollo. Once you announced, O Pythian One, "Of all men Socrates is wisest." But the wisest of men is now ordered to die as a wise man should not.



[28] At times in the past also there were unjust judgements. Once it was unjustly decided that Palamedes, the wisest of the Greeks of his time, should be put to death; for there were also at Ilium certain Anytuses and Meletuses. He, however, was not ordered to be silent before his death, but was permitted both to speak and to write, and writing his fate on an oarblade he sent to his father, Nauplius, a letter bearing the news of his death.

[29] Socrates, however, does not write one malicious or bitter thing, nor does he bear the jury a grudge, but he dies rejoicing and goes away obediently to the gods. Just as he was when speaking during his life, so is he now in conversation. Do not be surprised. This is the nature of wise men. Their wisdom does not leave them, not even in times of bad fortune.

[30] Music did not leave Orpheus after his death. The Thracian women tore him to pieces, just as the false accusers have Socrates. But though torn apart he still sang. The head of Orpheus went down the river Strymon singing its songs. A Phrygian fluteplayer Marsyas, who had been punished, wished to exchange his gifts<sup>5</sup> and could not do this. But he heard another man playing and came to life again at the song. So it is with Socrates also.

[31] Now do not hate nor mistrust philosophy. Can it be that you fear he will pray to the gods against you if he converses? But when he was speaking he did no such thing. Besides, a man could do this even in silence. Do you shrink from bringing him the hemlock when he is engaged in conversation? But when he is silent he is not Socrates. Allow him to speak as at a banquet. Let him drink a health to the deity.

[32] Just now when he was seen to be joyous and glad in his misfortune, and said what he said, I was certain that Socrates' accusers had been refuted. What did he say that caused you to order him to be silent? What attack did he make on the government, the laws, the civil authorities or the traditions handed down by our ancestors? Now as always he philosophizes most piously on behalf

<sup>5</sup>I have translated MSS δῶπα; but Professor B. Otis ingeniously suggests δῶπᾶν *skin*, cf. Ael. VH 13.21.

of the laws, and he says that he will never flee these his masters or be a metic among Megarians or Boeotians or a guest of Peloponnesians or Thessalians, but that he will remain here and obey the decision of Athenians.

[33] O Socrates, you who are most law-abiding and of all the men I know most in love with Athens to the very end, not even now do you wish to be away from Athens. No, he composes and plays songs and, though imprisoned, hymns the gods and now sings odes to Apollo. For at the end of his life Socrates became a poet. But you do not allow Socrates to speak even in prose.

[34] Your orders are contrary to the wishes of the god. O Apollo, on purpose you keep back the Delian ship as a hostage for Socrates and you do not send the holy vessel to Athens, thus giving your servant more days to live; and you order the winds not to carry the ship to Athens, so that Socrates may continue to philosophize. But these men are making your favor profitless.

[35] "Socrates is not to talk," he says, "not even if there are hearers present or Socrates himself wishes it." When in pain from his fetters he lifts up his legs to go to sleep, shall he say nothing about this? Shall he not philosophize on the relation of pleasure and pain? Simmias and Cebes ask him a question about the soul. Shall he not speak on this subject? While Thebans<sup>6</sup> philosophize shall an Athenian remain silent? He is about to die and he is joyful. This is what especially excites the wonder of his friends. Is he not to converse — how can it be? Not even if there is anyone who believes that the soul is immortal? If he owes a sacrifice to the gods shall he not bid one of his friends offer it? Even though he is about to drink the hemlock, shall he not make his customary drink offerings and prayers?

[36] For what does he say that is troublesome or untimely? Another man at the time of his death gives instructions regarding his property or his children or on the handling and burial of his body. But Socrates sits quietly, saying that there is no need to weep or moan or to think that the present life will prove to be the only

<sup>6</sup>I have translated the emendation of W. M. Calder III in *AJP* 81 (1960) 314: *Θηβαῖοι* for MSS *Ἀθηναῖοι*.

one, but that another life waits to receive us longer than our bodily one; and when we are released from bones and flesh and all this prison, whether it is to be called a body or a tomb, we each shall go away to a just dispensation; that while we are alive we must pursue wisdom and think of life as a training for death, remembering the great number of the ancient lessons surrounded by which we remain here, as we believe; but when our allotted destiny comes, we must be borne light and through the air to our masters the gods and the spirits who judge souls and assign to those who live with purity and justice and who with true philosophy have held themselves aloof from earthly things, attendance upon the gods and the course above the heavens and a vision of justice itself and of the Beautiful and of Immortality and of blessed Souls. But for those who have lived lawlessly and immorally, their souls filled with many impieties, there are Tartaruses and Cocytuses and Pyriphlegethons as receptions and terrible chastisements and eternal punishments in fire and darkness and weird rivers driven in an unending course.

[37] These are the words of Socrates, these his instructions, this is the will of Socrates. Who will begrudge us a share in the immortality of Socrates? Allow us to hear him again and to confirm these hopes of happiness. It is no matter to Socrates; for even if he does not speak, a long life awaits him and many conversations and the gods will be his hearers. To them he will speak, being set free he will philosophize, with them he will discuss all things. But for us, who will be left orphaned of Socrates, it is a terrible thing if no one of us will ask him any questions on any of our disputes or on these matters in particular, and if no one of us gains any benefits from the last hours of Socrates.

[38] Apollo, please stay the ship yet longer; let the festival at Delos continue to move slowly. I have questions to ask Socrates about speech and silence and salvation. And you, false accusers, permit us to benefit from Socrates while he is still alive. Alas, perhaps the ship will come today. This was foretold Socrates in a dream. Do not begrudge us one day. And perhaps even now, while I am busy here, Socrates converses with his friends. Words

such as these one can hear from the friends of Socrates who have listened to him speak, but not such words as one can hear from Socrates himself.

[39] I ask you, Socrates, the opposite of what these men order, to speak not only while you are alive nor with mortal tongue alone, but also to speak after you drink the hemlock. And do not stop speaking even when you die. I believe you: the soul is completely immortal, especially your soul. If any of the spirits of the wise visit the souls of their friends, do not be silent, but speak to us in dreams Socrates, as now do the gods.

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## An Interpretation

THE CONTRIVED SITUATION strikes one as odd. It is a day in Athens in 399 B.C. Meletus and his associates have recently secured the condemnation of Socrates. The execution has been stayed because of a delay in the return of the sacred ship from Delos. Not satisfied with what they have already gained, the prosecutors have petitioned the state to forbid Socrates, who is confined to prison, to speak with anyone, even with his wife, his children, or the jailer (§17). Libanius' piece is the imagined rebuttal. A nameless student of Socrates (§3) pleads in his favor. The speech pretends to be delivered to the *ekklesia* assembled at the Pnyx.<sup>1</sup>

Why does it all seem so odd? There are a number of reasons. First there is no testimony that such a motion was ever entertained in 399. Indeed there is no parallel for such procedure, legislative or judicial, in the known constitutional history of classical Athens. Libanius is quite right in holding (§§1, 14, 15, 19, 22) that there is no precedent. Not even Theramenes is relevant (§19). Plato's *Crito* and *Phaedo* show on the contrary that Socrates was quite voluble to the end. Further there existed no reasonable motive, such as fear of further corruption of the youth (§23), that he might incite the gods against the citizens (§31) or advocate treason (§32), which could have precipitated a motion that would quickly encounter the charge of being *παράνομος*. Libanius is quite right that such a proposal is unjust (§4), reprehensible and illegal as well (§§8, 11), that is, contrary to the laws of Solon because it is *ad hominem* legislation (Andocides, *de Mysteriori* 87).

Besides the inherent absurdity of the fundamental situation and before turning to details, there are two aspects of the work

<sup>1</sup>The clue is the terminology of §§ 11 and 16, *ψηφίσματος* and *ψηφισαμένοις*, not applicable to a law-court. The attempt of Karl Meiser, "Zu den Deklamationen des Libanios über Sokrates," *SBAW* (1910) No. 6, p. 8 to narrow the dramatic date to three days before Socrates' death is not convincing. I see no force in the comparison of §38 with Pl. *Crito* 43d nor in the citation of §§3 and 26. The speaker could not know the date of the ship's arrival and thus the indefiniteness in the Libanian passages cited by Meiser. Meiser discusses the *de Silentio* at pp. 8, 23-26. His paper is especially valuable for the gathering of relevant Platonic passages but his emendations are often capricious.

that deserve notice. Why does the speaker remain nameless? The citizens would want to know who was talking to them. If it were Crito, for example, a rehearsal of his benefits to the state or of his righteous life or of his qualifications as a character witness for Socrates could provide a valuable *captatio benevolentiae* and enhance a chance for success. And why are only two accusers mentioned throughout (§§7, 9, 28)? There is never a word about Lyco. Libanius certainly knew about him (*Apology* 1).

There are a number of other puzzling details. Let us work through the speech and isolate them. I do not include such an occasional and obvious anachronism as the *court herald* (§11). Actually the *archon basileus* would have made the announcement after the tabulation of the second ballot. Also the suggestion of praying "even in silence" (§31) is certainly not appropriate to fifth century Attica.

It may be a trifle misleading to say (§4) that Socrates "has caused his city to be renowned and admired among Greeks, both through travelers who come to visit him, and through his words which he sends about in every direction." Except for military service, Socrates never left Athens; and, but for a few feeble poetic efforts in prison (§33), Socrates never wrote anything. How then could he send his words about in every direction? There is the implication (§§13, 21) of an actual cutting out of Socrates tongue. Such mutilation is alien to Athenian scruples and there is justice in the accusation (§13), "You are making us Thracians instead of Athenians and instead of Greeks, barbarians." See Herodotus *passim* and the catalogue of atrocities in Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 185ff. At §23 Epigenes and Phaedo are called old men. But Phaedo was a youth in 399 (Plato, *Phaedo* 89b) and Epigenes' father was present at the trial (Plato, *Apology* 33c2). The conduct of Apollodorus (see Burnet on *Phaedo* 59a9) at the end does not suggest senility (§23). Protagoras (§24) is represented as alive in 399. It is implied at §25 that Socrates used to speak in the courts. This contradicts Plato, *Apology* 17d, where Socrates says that he is in court for the first time. The speaker (§26) observes: "I praised Xenophon too because when imprisoned in Thebes he did not neglect the discourses of

Prodicus, but posted bail and went to hear him. Do you think that the pupil would be a better philosopher than the teacher?" The anecdote is repeated at Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* I. 12.<sup>2</sup> There is no early testimony. But whether history or fiction, the remark is not in point, for Prodicus is talking and not the imprisoned Xenophon, who merely listens, while Libanius is interested in allowing Socrates to talk, not merely to listen. The suggestion (§31) that Socrates might pray to the gods against his prosecutors is not compatible with the lofty morality of the Platonic dialogues. Whatever is meant (§37) by the strange question "Who will begrudge us a share in the immortality of Socrates?" The final apostrophe (§39) is enigmatic if applied to the historical Socrates. "I ask you to speak after you drink the hemlock. And do not stop speaking even when you die."

These then are the embarrassing points that trouble a reader who insists on an historical interpretation of Libanius' speech. The piece is naive, if not inept. One sees why Foerster felt that it was written *a Libanio praesertim adulescente*.<sup>3</sup> This is the polite solution. Markowski, Münscher, and Schmid acquiesced.<sup>4</sup> Conviction may have been premature. It is salutary to recall that Libanius was a professor, well read and intelligent. He knew Plato better than many moderns.<sup>5</sup> Could the critics be at fault rather than the author? It is time to ask an essential question: is an historical approach, *sc.* an approach that applies the speech to the historical Socrates of 399, relevant? Is there an interpretation that will obviate the difficulties? I venture to suggest one which has the appeal of receiving the work not as a naive *Jugendschrift* but an important and moving document of historical interest.

The suggestion is simply that the pleading is intended as a protest against Christian encroachment upon the old pagan edu-

<sup>2</sup>The note of W. C. Wright, *Philostratus and Eunapius, The Lives of the Sophists* (Cambridge 1952) 37 n. 4, "There is no other evidence for this imprisonment of Xenophon," must be corrected.

<sup>3</sup>R. Foerster, *Libanii Opera* 5 (Leipzig 1909) 123 n. 1.

<sup>4</sup>H. Markowski, *De Libanio Socratis defensore* (Breslau 1910); Foerster-Münscher, *RE* 24 (1925) 2510; Schmid-Stählin, 2. 2. 994 n. 2.

<sup>5</sup>See E. Richsteig, *Libanius qua ratione Platonis operibus usus sit* (Diss. Breslau 1918) *passim*.

cation. Socrates is not meant to be the historical figure, but a symbol of pagan intellectual *paideia*. How does this supposition dispel the difficulties noticed above?

That the fundamental situation is imaginary becomes easily explicable. Libanius saw that it would be rhetorically more effective to preach his sermon in the guise of a dramatic allegory rather than baldly to expound ten reasons why the Christians should tolerate classical *paideia*. A strict classicist, he would naturally turn to the golden age of Athens to find the figure exemplifying the highest pagan intellectual achievement — Socrates. The philosopher's condemnation, imprisonment, and execution were historical events. The motion for enforced silence was an ingenious innovation to represent Christian suppression of the old education. The pleader is not named for he is Libanius himself, the actual speaker, the student of classical letters. Only Meletus and Anytus prosecute Socrates. Meletus, the religious fanatic, who prosecuted Andocides in the same year, is the Church. Anytus, the ancient politician, is the State. The presence of Lyco, who in 399 represented the aggrieved rhetors and sophists, would embarrass the allegory. Libanius is a rhetor and a sophist and the *defender* of Socrates. Lyco must be ignored.

The puzzling details are clarified quickly. Classical *paideia* has made Athens renowned and admired among the Greeks by the *logoi* which it has sent about in every direction, *sc.* educated men over the inhabited world have read the classical authors.<sup>6</sup> To cut out Socrates' tongue refers to banning the teaching of the classics. Teachers are the voice of the old culture. To quiet them is to cut out its tongue. That in 399 the historical Epigenes, Phaedo, and perhaps Apollodorus were not old men is irrelevant. It is a vivid way of saying that Libanius does not teach infants matter that will corrupt them. His students are mature men, able to look objectively at what they are told. So with Protagoras, the catalogue of sophists has contemporary reference. They represent other teachers, probably incompetent Christian ones. The remark that Socrates used to speak

<sup>6</sup>Professor Downey warns me that it would not be impossible for this to mean simply that Socrates talked to everyone remarking "Themistius compared himself to Socrates in this respect, implying that in Themistius' and Libanius' day it was not customary to talk with all comers."



in the courts does not refer to the historical man at all, but is a means of alluding to the Canon of the Ten Orators. The reference to Xenophon who, when imprisoned in Thebes, posted bail and went to hear Prodicus, implies Julian who, when banished by Constantius to Cappodocia "continued the study of ancient writers under Mardonius."<sup>7</sup>

On one level the analogy remains illogical but the reason for it is not careless composition. The assurance that Socrates will not turn the gods against his prosecutors means that the old classical culture is tolerant (it is the Christians who were not) and will not harbor treasonous ideas. "Who will begrudge us a share in the immortality of Socrates?" is a beautiful way of saying "Who will begrudge us a share in the immortal legacy of Greece?" The final apostrophe becomes a moving prayer. Do not stop speaking even when you die. It was prophetic as well. There were the few who vindicated Libanius and preserved the tradition for Erasmus.

It is superfluous to pursue the allegory through each sentence. A sensitive reader who studies Mr. Crosby's careful translation will see the *double entendre* in many places. Especially from section 29 until the end Libanius almost breaks through the fiction. His words are noble and moving. There is tragic pathos in the apostrophes to Apollo and Socrates. The eschatology at §36 is no longer garbled Neo-Platonism. With great care Libanius has tried to make Socratic teachings of the other world as acceptable as possible to a Christian audience. It is difficult to read the chapter without exclaiming "How very Christian!" Libanius wants to say that there is really not much difference.

There is a deeply personal note in §37. Libanius is convinced that the literature will never entirely perish. "But for us, who will be left orphaned of Socrates, it is a terrible thing if he does not speak on our disputes or on these matters and if none of us gains any benefits from the last hours of Socrates." And then (§38) "Apollo, please stay the ship yet longer; let the festival at Delos continue to move slowly. I have questions to ask Socrates." But the last of the great pagan educators ends on a note of exultation.

<sup>7</sup>A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire 324-1453* (Madison 1952) 69.

"I believe you: the soul is completely immortal, especially your soul . . . do not be silent, but speak to us in dreams, Socrates as do now the gods."

An allegorical use of the Socrates-figure ought not to alarm us. Intimations of Julian have been suspected in Libanius' *Apology*. A careful study still needs doing.<sup>8</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, perhaps a student of Libanius,<sup>9</sup> clearly has the scene of *Phaedo* in mind, when he describes the death of Julian (25. 3. 23; cf. Libanius 18. 272), "cum Maximo et Prisco philosophis super animorum sublimitate perplexius disputans." And the literary, oratorical allegory is the quintessence of the man. "Rede, Studium, Bücher sind seine Welt."<sup>10</sup>

An allegorical interpretation reveals in the work a power and depth, not to speak of rhetorical cleverness and skill, that puts out of court its contemptuous dismissal as a *Jugendschrift*. I should place the work at the end of the sophist's life, the period of disillusionment and despair that followed on the death of Julian and has been so well described by Walden.<sup>11</sup> I should even consider the possibility of posthumous publication. This would be compatible with the erratic palaeographical fate of the work.<sup>12</sup> It is a not reprehensible epitaph.

WILLIAM M. CALDER III

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
July 1960

<sup>8</sup>Dr. T.A. Suits and I are preparing the first translation of this speech into English. There is a German version available by Otto Apelt, *Libanius Apologie des Sokrates* (Leipzig 1922). Apelt has Jowett's habit of evading commitment in difficult passages but his introduction and notes are valuable.

<sup>9</sup>Schmid-Stählin, *op. cit.* 989, who cite Liban. *Ep.* 983W.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.* 997.

<sup>11</sup>John W. H. Walden, *The Universities of Ancient Greece* (New York 1909) 117-121.

<sup>12</sup>See Foerster, *op. cit.* 123-126. The work was not known to Reiske, whose famous edition was posthumously published by his widow in 1784 and 1791-1797, but was first edited by Jacob Morelli in 1785. I am grateful to Professor Glanville Downey and Dr. T. A. Suits who have generously and beneficially read my transcript. I have made use throughout of Mr. Crosby's accurate translation of the speech.

# John Vatatzes and John Comnenus

## Questions of Style and Detail in Byzantine Numismatics

*Michael Metcalf*

A HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS AGO there came to the hands of H. P. Borrell, a British merchant residing in Smyrna and a numismatist of distinction, a very large treasure of Byzantine gold coins that had been found in the region. The half-dozen pieces of Michael VIII which it included showed that the date of concealment of the treasure was shortly after 1260. All the rest of the nearly 1000 coins were identical in design. They were scyphate, or saucer-shaped, and on the concave side showed two standing figures — to the left, the emperor, wearing a crown and loros and holding a labarum and akakia, and to the right, the Mother of God raising one hand in blessing as, with the other, she sets the crown on the emperor's head. The convex side of the coins showed Christ the King, his work accomplished, seated on a throne, with one hand raised in benediction and the other holding the Book of the Gospels. Half a dozen of these coins bore the name of Theodore II Lascaris (1254-58) while on all the rest on which the inscription could be seen<sup>1</sup> it gave the name and titles, John Despot, the Porphyrogete.

Borrell, in publishing the discovery,<sup>2</sup> questioned de Saulcy's attribution of these coins to John II Comnenus (1118-43). They belong in fact to Theodore's predecessor at Nicaea, John III Vatatzes (1222-54), as was indicated by the composition of the hoard, but

<sup>1</sup>They may be presumed to have been the great majority. The age-structure of the deposit suggests, as does that of the Smyadovo hoard mentioned below, that John's coinage was struck in far greater quantities than that of Theodore.

<sup>2</sup>H.P. Borrell, "Unedited coins of the Lower Empire", *Numismatic Chronicle* 4 (1841-42) 15ff.

Borrell's uncertainty was understandable, for the title *Porphyrogenitus* was much used by John II whereas John III's claim to have been born in the purple was without substance.<sup>3</sup> The correct attribution was given in the Sotheby sale-catalogue of Borrell's coin collection<sup>4</sup> and also by Rollin in another article prompted by the hoard.<sup>5</sup> Wroth, however, in the second part of the British Museum Catalogue of Byzantine coins listed the type, including some of Borrell's specimens,<sup>6</sup> under John II. Three years later, in a companion volume, he described them again as coins of John III, professing himself finally convinced by the arguments for the later dating.<sup>7</sup> It must seem to numismatists of the present generation that Wroth was slow to recognise the weight of the hoard-evidence,

<sup>3</sup>It was not until the end of his life that Theodore I named John, the husband of his daughter Irene, as his successor.

<sup>4</sup>Sotheby, 12 July 1852, lot 971.

<sup>5</sup>[C.-L.] Rollin, "Monnoies d'or des empereurs de Nicée pendant l'occupation de Constantinople par les princes croisés, de 1204 à 1261," *Revue Numismatique* (1841) 171ff. Rollin, who was a much esteemed numismatic dealer in Paris, said that the coins he described had been found near Brusa, but it is tempting to suppose that Borrell's hoard and his were one and the same (cf. Bellinger's notes on the Corinth hoard of 1925 [*infra* n. 19]); the coincidence would be very great, seeing that no similar hoard has been recovered in a further 120 years. If this is correct, it would seem that Rollin's source may have had the first selection from the treasure; the exact quantities of each type must remain uncertain, as must the find-spot. *Pace* Mosser (*op. cit.* 79f *infra* n. 21) Borrell gives the date of discovery as 1839.

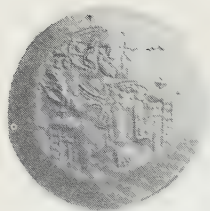
<sup>6</sup>W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum*, vol. II (1908) 557ff. Nos. 32 and 34 are from the Borrell sale. It may be presumed, but is not certain, that they are from the Smyrna hoard.

<sup>7</sup>The same, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards and of the Empires of Thessalonica, Nicaea and Trebizond in the British Museum* (1911) 213ff. The catalogues are cited as *BMC* and distinguished from each other if necessary as *BMC*<sup>2</sup> and *BMC*<sup>3</sup>. The nomisma, Type 6, of Manuel I is also relisted in *BMC*<sup>3</sup> where it is reattributed to Theodore I.

## Plate 9 — The Ibrahim Pasha Parcel

No. 1. Secret-mark, two crosses. 4.32g. *BMC*<sup>3</sup> 1. No. 2. Very similar to No. 1. 3.73g. *BMC* 2. No. 3. Very similar to Nos. 1–2. 4.00g. *BMC* 3. No. 4. Two crosses (seven dots at shoulders). 4.50g. *BMC* 4. No. 5. No mark. 4.55g. *BMC* 12. No. 6. Diamond of four dots right. 4.26g. *BMC* 7. No. 7. Die-duplicate of No. 6. 4.63g. *BMC* 8. No. 8. No mark (nimbus as Nos. 6–7). 4.52g. *BMC* 20. No. 9. Dot left and right, close to seat of throne. 4.28g. (pierced). *BMC* 11. No. 9 may well not have been associated with Nos. 1–8. It seems quite likely that *BMC*<sup>2</sup> John II (John III) 3, 4, 9 and 15–19 are from the same hoard. *BMC* 6 and 10, from the Ibrahim Pasha collection, are of John II, as is *BMC* 1, which is mounted for suspension.

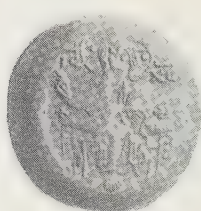




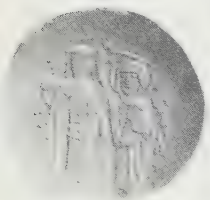
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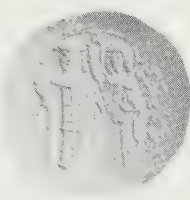
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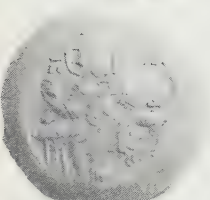
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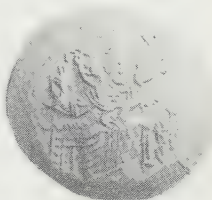
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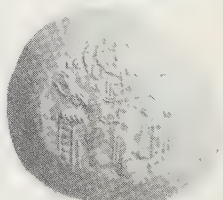
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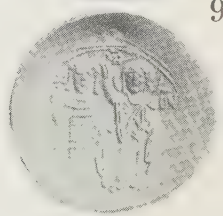
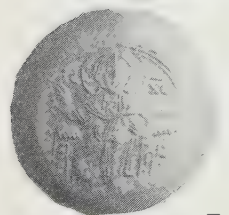


PLATE 10 METCALF



10



11



12



13



14



15



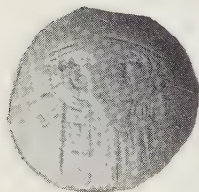
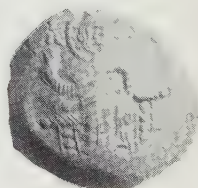
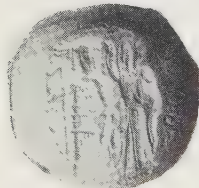
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17



18



but his reluctance over the title *Porphyrogenitus* was not without reason and points to further dimensions of the problem.

Among the gold coins listed under John II in *BMC* there is considerable variety in style. Some of the specimens of *BMC* Type 3 — the type in question — are appreciably larger than the others, of finer workmanship, and with a more complete inscription in small, neat lettering.<sup>8</sup> Their style, which is quite easily recognisable, conveys an impression of space (PLATE 12, No. 30). It is found at its most characteristic only on the gold coinages of Alexius I Comnenus, 1081-1118 (PLATE 12, No. 28)<sup>9</sup>, and John II.<sup>10</sup> Any doubts about the attribution of the large variety of *BMC* Type 3 are removed by its occurrence in the Kastoria hoard,<sup>11</sup> which was concealed about the middle of the twelfth century. Type 3, then, is to be divided between John Comnenus and John Vatatzes,<sup>12</sup> and we see that John III struck coins reproducing all the details of the design, even down to the legend *ΙΩ ΔΕΣΠΟ ΤΩ ΠΟΡΦΥΡΟΓΕΝΗΤΗ*, of others issued by his predecessor of the same name a century earlier. This can hardly be coincidence. John III was, I believe, deliberately recalling the wise government and successful reign of John II<sup>13</sup> and stating his claim, by the medium of a strictly imperial prerogative, gold coinage, to be the true inheritor of the

<sup>8</sup>*BMC* 41-3; Pl. LXVIII, 11.

<sup>9</sup>*BMC* 4-8; Pl. LXIV, 2, 3.

<sup>10</sup>*BMC* 1-2, 5-6 10-14, 41-3; Pl. LXVI, 7, 8, 12, Pl. LXVII, 1, 11.

<sup>11</sup>*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 71-72 (1947-48) 393.

<sup>12</sup>*BMC* 41-3 are of John II, and 20-40 (= 1-21 among *BMC*<sup>s</sup> 1-24) are of John III.

<sup>13</sup>An exact comparison is afforded by the young Eadgar, first king of England (959-75), who, very conscious that he was the great-grandson of Alfred, recalled the glories of the past by reproducing the design of his predecessor's pennies with the monogram of London. One wonders in both instances how the monarchs obtained the old coins. See R.H.M. Dolley and D. M. Metcalf, "The reform of the English coinage under Eadgar", in *Anglo-Saxon Coins* (ed. Dolley), 1961.

### Plate 10 — The Erymantheia Hoard

No. 10. No mark. 4.24g. No. 11. No mark. 4.37g. No. 12. Dot right (radiate nimbus cruciger). 4.61g. No. 13. No mark. Late style, e.g. throne? 4.30g. No. 14. Uncertain letter right. Late style? Of a more coppery appearance than the rest of the coins in the hoard. 4.47g. No. 15. Dot left, two dots right. Late style? 4.67g. No. 16. Diamond of four dots right. Poor style. 4.46g. No. 17. Asterisk right, perhaps also an uncertain mark left. 4.24g. No. 18. Dot left, four faint small dots right. 4.40g.



Empire, whose metropolis and western themes he saw it as his destiny to recover from the Franks and from the pretending dynasties established at Salonica and in Epirus.

His *τρικέφαλα*, so called because of the three heads shown on them,<sup>14</sup> were evidently issued in great quantities. They had a wide circulation in the coastlands of the Aegean and in the Black Sea hinterland of eastern Bulgaria, as is indicated by the various hoards in which they have been found. A large deposit was discovered in 1940 at Pirgovo on the lower Danube<sup>15</sup> and a dozen more coins at Nesebir (Mesembria) in 1933.<sup>16</sup> Twelve were found in a hoard at Smyadovo in northeastern Bulgaria in 1945 along with gold of Michael VIII and of Andronicus II with Michael IX (1295-1320).<sup>17</sup>



MAP SHOWING THE FINDSPOTS OF GOLD COINAGE OF JOHN III

*The attribution of the coins in the Messini, Athens, and Stoenesti hoards is unconfirmed. The distribution of finds suggests the importance of two valley routes: (i) northwestwards from Nesebir, (ii) northwards from Salonica.*

<sup>14</sup>The name was sometimes written in the abbreviated form *Γκλ'*: see F. Dölger, "Chronologisches und Prosopographisches zur byzantinischen Geschichte des 13. Jahrhunderts," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 27 (1927) 291ff.

<sup>15</sup>T. Gerasimov, in *Izvestiya na Bulgarskiya Arkheologicheski Institut* (hereafter *IBAI*) 14 (1940-42) 282ff, where the coins are attributed to John II. Dr. Gerasimov has kindly informed me that they are of the variety *BMC*<sup>2</sup> 20-40, and belong in fact to John III.

<sup>16</sup>The same, *IBAI* 8 (1934) 467ff, and the same remark.

<sup>17</sup>The same, in *Izvestiya na Arkheologicheskiya Institut* (hereafter *IAI*) 17 (1950) 316ff, and cf. *IBAI* 15 (1946) 235ff.



From Greece, coins of the type from the three hoards of Erymantheia 1955, Drama 1949 and Thessaly 1949 are discussed and illustrated here.<sup>18</sup> Two *τρικέφαλα* of John with one of Theodore II were found in the course of the Corinth excavations of 1925,<sup>19</sup> and another came to light at the same place in 1934 in a hoard of French silver coins deposited after 1253.<sup>20</sup> A hoard of 100 coins was discovered at Pergamum in 1912.<sup>21</sup> Certain other finds, from which coins with the name of John were attributed to other rulers, may perhaps also have belonged to John Vatatzes.<sup>22</sup>

Wroth, in his later comments on *BMC* Type 3, remarked that there were other coins apparently of John II which ought perhaps to be transferred to John III.<sup>23</sup> A number of them are of *BMC*<sup>3</sup> Type 2, the commonest of the issues of gold by John Comnenus, which shows half-length figures of the emperor and the Mother of God as its principal design. The type, like Type 3, divides readily into two varieties, a larger, in the fine, early twelfth-century style referred to above (PLATE 12, No. 29), and a smaller, of inferior execution (PLATE 12, No. 31). Some if not all of the smaller pieces are obvious candidates for a thirteenth-century dating. The stumbling-

<sup>18</sup>The accession of the Erymantheia hoard is noted in *BCH* 80 (1956) 228; the 9 coins now in the Greek National Numismatic Collection were selected from 17 coins that were found. A similar hoard was said to have been found in the Patras district in the 1930's. The Drama hoard is noted in *BCH* 74 (1950) 292f. The gold coin from Thessaly was found along with 46 Venetian grossi and 7 fragments in a deposit concealed *ca.* 1256-60. Mrs. E. Varoukha-Khristodouloupoulou, the Keeper of Coins, most kindly gave me every facility to study all three finds. Work in Athens was made possible by the tenure of the School Studentship of the British School of Archaeology at Athens.

<sup>19</sup>A.R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of Coins found at Corinth, 1925* (New Haven 1930) 74.

<sup>20</sup>See K.M. Edwards, "Report on the coins found in the excavations at Corinth during the years 1930-35," *Hesperia* 6 (1937) 241ff.

<sup>21</sup>Note by K. Regling, in S. McA. Mosser, *A Bibliography of Byzantine Coin Hoards* (New York 1934) 65.

<sup>22</sup>Messini, 1900, 4 coins (Mosser, *sub* Ithome); Athens, 1928, 10 coins (*ibid.*); Princes Island, 1930, 16,000 coins (*Rassegna Numismatica* 27 [1930] 150); see Mosser, *op. cit.* 70 under "Prinkipo," but may there be a confusion with a hoard not of Byzantine coins? Cf. K. Regling, *Der griechische Goldschatz von Prinkipo*, Museum der Altertümer zu Istanbul (Berlin 1931). The Stoenesti hoard, described as of John II, is perhaps of John III; see B. Mitrea, in *Dacia* n.s. 2 (1958), 493ff. For the Krestiltsi hoard of 1952, 10 coins of John III, Type 3, and for the Preslav grave-find of 1953, 2 similar coins, see T. Gerasimov in *Iai* 20 (1955) 602ff. For the Bansko hoard of 1957, of 8 similar coins, see Gerasimov in *Iai* 22 (1959) 151. For a grave-find of one (pierced) coin at Pietroasele, see O. Iliescu in *Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică* 2 (1958) 455.

<sup>23</sup>*BMC*<sup>3</sup> 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 15-19. See *BMC*<sup>3</sup>, p. 215.

block is that there are no provenances by which the matter could be settled. Among all the hoards of John III, Type 2 has never been recorded in association with Type 3. It has been said that Asia Minor is numismatically more like a whole continent than a single country.<sup>24</sup> This is almost certainly true of the Byzantine coinages of the second half of the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth centuries; it seems to have been the place of origin of many of the scarce types of scyphate bronze coinage, for which provenances are nowhere else noted.<sup>25</sup> The lack of hoard-evidence for Type 2 should not, therefore, seem an insuperable obstacle, although it indicates that the issue, if it in fact belongs partly to John Vatatzes, must have had a restricted currency. Even if only a few specimens could be shown to belong to John III, it would be enough to establish that he followed the remarkable monetary policy of reproducing not one but two of the designs of John II's coinages, and to make it necessary to consider carefully any coin apparently of John II in a style that would be exceptional for the twelfth century.

The two specimens for which the best case can be made out are *BMC* 8 and 9 (PLATE 12, Nos. 32, 33). They are of small size, and their general style is unlike that of the best coins of John II. They have the bevelled edges characteristic of Nicaean issues. Both have secret-marks in the spaces above the throne on the convex side, a feature common on the gold of John III but unknown on that of John II. The throne itself, with jewelled sides, is exactly like those on the thirteenth-century gold, and quite different from the twelfth-century version, in which care is always taken to show Christ's footstool (PLATE 12, Nos. 28-30). The beginning of the inscription, KE BOHΘEI, distinguishes *BMC* 8 and 9 from coins of Type 2 in twelfth-century style, on which it is lacking. The variation in weight between the two coins suggests a degree of carelessness in their manufacture which would not have been

<sup>24</sup>M. Grant, The President's Address, *Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* (1956) p. 4 (bound with *Numismatic Chronicle*, Sixth Series vol. 16 [1956]).

<sup>25</sup>The evidence from which I believe that this conclusion can be drawn is set out in "Byzantine scyphate bronze coinage in Greece," *Annual of the British School of Archaeology at Athens* 55 (in press).

tolerated under John II.<sup>26</sup> Finally, a detail in the ornamentation of the emperor's crown speaks strongly for a thirteenth-century dating. The pendants at either side are shown by vertical lines ending in a group of dots representing jewels. The form of the pendants is an important criterion in all the Byzantine coinages of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Under the Comnenian emperors they are shown on the coinage in the best styles, almost always, by three dots arranged thus:  $\cdot \cdot$ . The standard form was changed towards the end of the twelfth century, to become  $\cdot$  on the gold of Alexius III. The latter arrangement is common on the gold of Nicaea but after 1204 the minutely careful regulation of the coinage was not maintained. Half a dozen forms of the pendant can be found on John's *τρικέφαλα*.<sup>27</sup> The dilemma of *BMC* 8 and 9, which have pendants of only two dots thus  $\cdot \cdot$ , is that either they are coins of John II with so many exceptional features of style that they cannot be thought to have been struck at the metropolitan mint, or they belong to John III and are deliberate copies of the type issued a century before. There need, I believe, be no doubt which is the correct answer. The form of the pendants is sufficient to show that *BMC* 15-19 should also be transferred to John III: among five coins, there are as many different arrangements of the jewels.

Type 1 is less readily divided on grounds of general style. *BMC* 3, 4 and 7, however, have pendants which make it certain that they are not coins of John II. *BMC* 1, 2, 5 and 6 would seem to be correctly attributed to the twelfth century. The coins to which Wroth drew attention should thus all be transferred to John III. It only remains to point out that the coin inscribed ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΔΕΣΠ

<sup>26</sup>John III's gold fully maintains the traditional weight of the nomisma (although with only 2/3 gold content — see Rollin, *op. cit.*, for assay results) but there was distinctly greater variation in weight from coin to coin. Means and standard deviations: (i) for Alexius I: the Depentzikos hoard, 9 coins, 4.34g., 0.097g. (ii) for John II: *BMC* 10-14 and 42, 4.34 g., 0.088g. (iii) for Manuel I: the Corinth hoard, 4.32g., 0.120g. (iv) for John III: my Nos. 1-8, 4.32g., 0.29g.; the Erymantheia hoard; 4.42g., 0.14g.; *BMC*<sup>2</sup> 8, 9, 15-19, 4.33g., 0.24g.

<sup>27</sup>A fuller discussion of the representation of the pendants will be found in the article on scyphate bronze coinage cited above. Under Manuel I, pendants of only one or two dots are by no means uncommon on the gold coinage; see the plate accompanying J.M. Harris, "A gold hoard of Corinth," *AJA* 43 (1939) 268ff. On gold of John II I have never seen any forms of pendant other than the 3 drop-shaped jewels on "stalks" as shown on *PLATE* 12, Nos. 29-30, 3 simple dots, or something transitional between the two forms (e.g. *BMC* 12 and 13).

ΤΩ ΠΦΤΡΟΓΕ which Wroth gave to Theodore I<sup>28</sup> is more plausibly to be interpreted as a transitional issue struck at the beginning of the reign of Theodore II.

There is a considerable range of style, although nothing like the contrast that has been described above, among John III's coins. Also, every other specimen has a secret-mark, indicative no doubt of some detail of the mint-organization behind its issue, above the throne on the convex side.<sup>29</sup> At least a dozen such secret-marks occur. Their variety suggests that the organization of the coinage was both careful and complex, while the differences in style between one coin and another indicate either that there was a long stylistic progression during John's thirty-two-year reign or that there was more than one mint at work — or both. Excluding one or two pieces which stand aside from the rest as being evidently provincial, such as PLATE 10, No. 17 for which the dies were engraved by a workman who did not understand how the loros was worn, there are one or two small clues, such as the blundering of the legend ΤΩ ΠΦΡΓ to become ΤΩ ΠΡΥΦ, ΤΩ ΠΡΤΡΟΓ, etc., and secret-marks composed of initials such as ΔΡ, which point to the existence of a number of mints. The problem is as intriguing as it is difficult; and the assertion that the precious metals were coined at provincial mints must still seem unorthodox enough to call for thorough proof.<sup>30</sup> Only hoards could provide conclusive evidence by associating certain styles with particular regions. Until several hoards of John's gold coinage discovered in western Asia Minor have been described there will be no possibility of writing a definitive account

<sup>28</sup>BMC<sup>3</sup>, p. 204f.

<sup>29</sup>The use of secret- or privy-marks became widespread on medieval coinages from the second half of the thirteenth century. Cf. the Venetian grossi of R. Zeno (1252-68) as listed by A. N. Papadopoli, *Le Monete di Venezia descritte e illustrate* (1893-1919) *ad loc.* Secret-marks to which those on the gold of Nicaea are perhaps similar in character were already in use on the Byzantine bronze coinage under John Zimisces and his successors in the early eleventh century (Anonymous Type A); I have argued that they are localized in their occurrence and must therefore be mint-marks: see "Provincial issues among the Byzantine bronze coinage of the eleventh century," *Hamburger Beiträge zur Numismatik* 5 (in press).

<sup>30</sup>It has become clear that not all the bronze coinage of the twelfth century was the work of the metropolitan mint. For the proposed attribution of certain varieties to Greek mints, see "Byzantine scyphate bronze coinage in Greece," *loc. cit.* Wroth, BMC<sup>3</sup> p. lxxii, suggests Nicaea as the mint-place of John III's gold.



of its issue. At the moment provenances can be attached to very few specimens of which photographs are available.<sup>31</sup>

Part of a hoard which I believe must have come from Asia Minor is now preserved, although without record of provenance, in the British Museum. In 1849, the British Consul-General in Egypt, Sir Charles Murray, negotiated the purchase for the Museum of a considerable number of classical, Byzantine and Arabic coins from the collection which had been formed by the late regent, Ibrahim Pasha.<sup>32</sup> Among them were nine coins of John III, at least eight of which have in common certain trivial points of style that distinguish them from the great majority of other specimens of the type and make it certain that they are from a single source. The points are so uninteresting in themselves that the coins would not have been selected from a larger number because of them. A comparative study of these trivialities, however, quickly shows that the variations, at first sight meaningless, are amenable to order.

On all nine coins, the design on both sides is enclosed by a double circle of dots. Most other specimens are less carefully made and have a linear border (compare PLATE 9, the Ibrahim Pasha parcel, with PLATE 10, the Erymantheia hoard), which may be double, but is more usually single and incomplete. A second characteristic detail of the Ibrahim Pasha group of coins is in the row of 3 dots on the emperor's shoulders: on other varieties there are usually at least half a dozen dots (if the reader will continue to refer to PLATES 9 and 10, the coins will gradually begin to look less identical!). The 3 dots at the shoulders are a more general criterion than the secret-marks, for they are found with 2 crosses (PLATE 9, Nos. 1-3), a diamond of 4 dots (Nos. 6-7), and on coins without secret-marks (Nos. 5, 8). They are not, however, an invariable feature. This is shown by PLATE 9, No. 4, which is closely similar to PLATE 9, Nos. 1-3 in such details as the *loros* but has 7 dots at the shoulders. No. 4 must have come from the same workshop as

<sup>31</sup>The only hoard which has ever been properly published, with photographs, is that from Corinth in 1925.

<sup>32</sup>The transaction is recorded in a copy of a letter from Murray, dated 17 November 1849, in the manuscript *Minutes of the Department of Coins and Medals*, vol. I (1838-56) p. 158, kept in the British Museum. Ibrahim Pasha (1789-1848) was commander-in-chief of the Turkish forces at the Battle of Navarino.

Nos. 1-3 but is perhaps a little earlier or later in date. Nos. 6-8 can be grouped together because they have five dots arranged in a cross, instead of only one, in each arm of the nimbus cruciger. The two with a secret-mark are struck from the same pair of dies; the presence of die-duplicates as well as the "near-duplicates" Nos. 1-3 in a hoard drawn from so extensive and varied an issue as John III's coinage suggests that those particular coins had not long left the mint. It follows that the Ibrahim Pasha hoard is unlikely to have been an *Auslandsfund*<sup>33</sup> from Bulgaria or Frankish Greece.

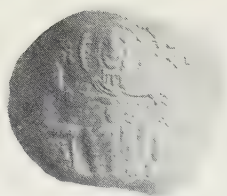
The Erymantheia hoard is far more varied in character, and includes half a dozen different secret-marks. Nearly all the coins belong to the general group with a single linear border. Apart from the specimen with an asterisk as secret-mark, which stands quite alone (PLATE 10, No. 17), the only obvious intruder is a coin of neat workmanship with a double linear border (PLATE 10, No. 18). In order to find parallels to the varieties in this and the Drama and Thessaly finds one must, until other hoards have been published, turn to museum holdings and sale-catalogues. Three comparisons will be briefly made.

The coin found in Thessaly in 1949 and illustrated on PLATE 11, No. 21 has badly blundered pendants and combines with a double linear border the rather unusual feature of a double linear outline to the cross in the nimbus. Other specimens with the same form of nimbus cruciger match the Thessaly coin in the double linear border and the blundered pendants which may even not be a pair.

<sup>33</sup>A find from territory which was outside the jurisdiction of the authority issuing the coins which it contained. There does not seem to be a convenient word in English.

### Plate 11 — The Drama and Thessaly Finds, and Coins Illustrating Stylistic Groups

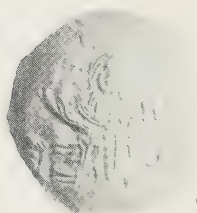
No. 19. No mark. 4.52g. Drama, 1949. No. 20. Dot in field left. 4.25g. Drama, 1949. No. 21. II right. The metal rather whiter than usual. 4.49g. Thessaly, 1949. No. 22. Uncertain, but perhaps pyramid of three large dots left (double linear outline to cross in nimbus). Foreign Ambassador sale, 704. No. 23. Dot left and right (radiate nimbus cruciger). 4.47g. BMC<sup>3</sup> 10. No. 24. Dot right (radiate nimbus cruciger). Foreign Ambassador sale, 690. No. 25. The same. H. P. Hall sale, London, 16 November 1950, 2306. 4.53g. No. 26. Uncertain mark right. Foreign Ambassador sale, 691. No. 27. The same mark. 4.25g. BMC 19.



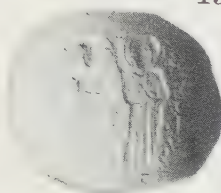
19



20



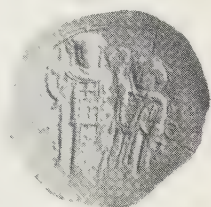
21



22



23



24



25



26



27

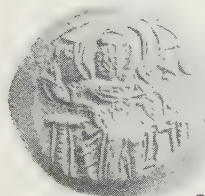


PLATE 12 METCALF



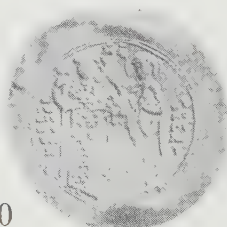
28



29



30



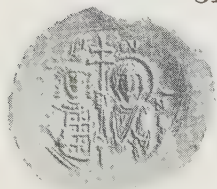
31



32



33



ALEXIUS I, JOHN II; OTHER COINS OF JOHN III



The Thessaly coin has the secret-mark II, and another from the Foreign Ambassador sale, unfortunately in very worn condition, seems to have three large dots arranged in a pyramid as a secret-mark to the left of the throne (PLATE 11, No. 22)<sup>34</sup>, while *BMC* 18 is unmarked;<sup>35</sup> as with the Ibrahim Pasha parcel, a single stylistic group includes more than one secret-mark.

Second, a variety in the form of the nimbus cruciger in which the arms of the cross are exaggeratedly radiate points to another small group of coins which correspond with one another also in having pendants in the form : (although one of the dots is sometimes missing) and the secret-marks of a single small dot to the right of the figure of Christ or alternatively two dots, one at each side.<sup>36</sup> The loros is of a variety which is practically standard, down to the last dot, among coins with a single linear border. A coin from the Erymantheia hoard belongs to this group (PLATE 10, No. 12) as do *BMC* 10 (PLATE 11, No. 23, two dots,) *BMC* 24 (one dot) and *BMC* 23 (no secret-mark). Two similar coins were sold in Munich in 1957<sup>37</sup> which, it is tempting to suppose, may have derived from a single hoard.

Third, another coin from the Foreign Ambassador sale<sup>38</sup> takes on added interest because its puzzling secret-mark, more easily recognised than described (see PLATE 11, No. 26), can be matched

<sup>34</sup>Glendining, 7 March 1957, lot 704, incorrectly catalogued as Theodore II. For the secret-mark, which is conjectural, cf. John II (in fact John III) *BMC*<sup>2</sup> 8.

<sup>35</sup>It has two dots in the middle of the staff of the labarum and, unusually, two at the bottom.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. No. 9 in the Ibrahim Pasha parcel, where the two dots are much nearer the seat of the throne.

<sup>37</sup>K. Kress, 6 December 1957 (catalogue no. 106) nos. 522 and 523, listed as from different sources; incorrectly described as coins of "Theodosius III" (*sic*).

<sup>38</sup>Lot 691.

## Plate 12 — Alexius I, John II; Other Coins of John III

No. 28. Alexius I, *BMC* Type 1. Foreign Ambassador sale, 688. No. 29. John II, *BMC* Type 2. Foreign Ambassador sale, 696. No. 30. John II, *BMC* Type 3. *BMC* 42. No. 31. John III, "Type 2". Foreign Ambassador sale, 695. No. 32. John III, "Type 2", variety with thrones as on Nos. 1-27. Pyramid of three dots right. 4.81g. *BMC* 8. No. 33. The same variety as No. 32. Asterisk left and right. 4.10g. *BMC* 9.

exactly from *BMC* 19 (PLATE 11, No. 27) which agrees also in the double linear border and the pendants.

The way of working at a problem such as John's gold presents is very much like solving a jig-saw puzzle: here are two or three pieces that can be interlocked, here are several dozen that must somehow belong together in the same part of the finished picture. It is chiefly persistence that is called for, and the details of solving are of general interest only as an illustration of numismatic method. The point of recording them is that the pieces are not supplied but have to be collected, and that they are at present being neglected or even thrown away as hoards are summarily published or dispersed. What sort of picture will finally be put together it is too early to say, but the fragments which have been discussed will, I hope, convince others who may have the opportunity to study John's gold that there is a picture to complete and that progress is not difficult.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

*September 1960*

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